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The Columbia Street Story

by

Roy M. Bates

and

Kenneth B. Keller

INDIANA COLLECTION
MAY 19 1984
FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA

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FORT WAYNE PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

Fort Wayne Public Library
Fort Wayne, Indiana
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INTRODUCTION

The tri-state region, confined by lines drawn from Chicago to Grand Rapids, Lansing, Detroit, Toledo, Columbus, Dayton, and Indianapolis, comprises an area approximately the size of the state of Indiana. Fort Wayne has consistently through the years been this area's most populous city, challenged only occasionally by Gary, Indiana.

Early in the aboriginal era, the portage at what is now Fort Wayne was found to be the shortest route between the Great Lakes and the inland waterways. Here a ten-mile overland trail connected the Maumee and Wabash rivers. As the French, the British, and later the Americans arrived, the importance of this portage was apparent, and forts were erected to complete control of this connecting link and area.

General Anthony Wayne, after subjugating the confederated Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, proceeded directly to the headwaters of the Maumee River. Here he erected a fortification, which was dedicated on October 22, 1794, and named Fort Wayne. At first the growth of the community around the fort was very slow but was greatly accelerated after the Wabash and Erie Canal came to the village.

Columbia Street paralleled the canal one-half block to the south in the business district of the city and became the principal business street. The railroads later preempted the function of the canal and greatly intensified the street's activity. The co-authors of this publication have attempted to portray for the reader the considerable business activity which existed here and to point out the importance of the street to this area over a period of almost 140 years. With the advent of commercial motor vehicles, the decline of the street came rapidly. Merchants were no longer dependent on railroad sidings for receipt of merchandise and could locate and expand their establishments in outlying areas. Fort Wayne's recent redevelopment program absorbed four of the street's five blocks. The 100 block of West Columbia Street is now called "The Landing."

The following story of Columbia Street proceeds as the street developed from east to west. The account was gleaned largely from the many Fort Wayne newspapers published through the years and a few interviews with descendants of former business people associated with the street.

Roy M. Bates and Kenneth B. Keller

FOREWORD

The joint sponsors of this publication, the Fort Wayne Bicentennial Commission, the Board of Trustees of the Fort Wayne Public Library, and the Public Library Board for Allen County are pleased to present the COLUMBIA STREET STORY.

The paper has been prepared as a local commemoration of the American Revolution Bicentennial, 1776-1976. The authors have made considerable effort to verify facts, personal and place names, and dates. Errors may have inadvertently occurred, as old Fort Wayne newspapers provided source material. The sponsors wish to express sincere appreciation to the coauthors, Roy M. Bates and Kenneth B. Keller. They have recorded an important chapter in the city's commercial and economic history and have incorporated the picturesque social life of the period.

A GAY COLUMBIA STREET GREETED 20TH CENTURY!

Dust off bowlers and turn back the clock--it's Saturday night on Columbia Street!

These were the five blocks that usurped the intended schematics of Fort Wayne and controlled the ebb and flow of the city's economy for many years.

As its name implies, Main Street was laid out for that purpose--but Columbia Street fooled the planners and started playing host to the city's commerce and culture when the canal came, and continued that role for several decades after the railroads puffed in, forced the canal to run dry, and settled permanently in the transportation field.

Columbia Street Saturday nights were a tumult of people, buggies, wagons, blazing store windows, and panhandlers. The heavy odors of malt and sawdust fanned over the sidewalks from swinging doors to tempt or revolt the shoppers.

A policeman with walrus mustache lumbered through the crowds and when he tarried for any length, it was accepted that a lane soon would be cleared for the horse-drawn police paddy wagon--its warning bell could be heard for blocks.

The dreaded conveyance usually came for the panhandlers who were inclined to settle matters of competition with their fists.

This was Columbia Street of the early 20th Century--famous for its wares, its cuisine, its barbershops and above all, its people. It was an avenue of saloons, free lunches and enterprise.

During its life as the city's real Main Street, old Columbia Street saw some 2,500 different businesses come and go along its short spread.

Mornings were a strange contrast--some of the merchants came to their offices in silent, gliding electric cars--they were a signal for the barbers to

check their linens.

Some remember the old battery station, at the present site of Coopers, Washington and Broadway, where weird lights flickered all night as batteries for the electrics were charged for the next day's use.

Today Columbia Street breeds nostalgia for those who remember the magic of her youth. Saturday nights are filled with shadows now, for Columbia's single block has settled down to the tempo of wholesale houses and hostelryes. But she certainly had her fling!

The old business day started early on Columbia Street--at 7:00 a.m. and the doors closed reluctantly at 6:00 p.m. Saturday generally was payday in Fort Wayne and that meant longer hours from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. for store workers.

Their own payday was prudently timed after the evening lunch period on Saturday.

A typical business was the H. J. Ash kitchen-ware and stove firm which stood in the 100 block east. For many years it was the best-kept agency in the nation for the Garland Stove Company. Fred Ash, associated with his father in the business, couldn't tolerate dust or fingerprints and he was out to banish them from the time he arrived until the doors closed for the day.

And so there was never a dull moment for anyone hired to "flunky" in the store. The day opened with sweeping the sidewalks, which had been sprinkled first to lay the dust, and then the store. The windows were washed daily and the handyman helped trim them, too.

The nickel work of the ornate stoves on the display line had to be rubbed constantly to erase fingerprints of shoppers and freshening up Ash's office was a daily chore. The showcases had to be cleaned inside and out once a week, and the shelves kept filled with stock.

In the winter, the basement furnace and five heating stoves had to be stoked. When the essentials had been taken care of, there were stoves to be uncrated and assembled. And the handyman still found time to help deliver and install stoves of various kinds.

Stove hauling and installing was a heavy, dirty

task and often the nearby swinging doors had a special temptation for these laborers. Every time the Ash dray left the loading platform in the rear with a burden of polished cast iron, it had to pass one or two famous saloons--Dutch Heine's or Norm Hendrickson's.

The young men who helped keep the business running were rarely tempted. They often visited the saloons for a glass of milk which gave them access to the free lunch including a wide assortment of cold meats and cheese.

It was a popular custom for them to close a long Saturday with a pie-eating contest at the Crescent Restaurant around the corner on Calhoun Street. This bilious pastime was a tribute to the culinary art of the day.

There was another responsibility, happily banished for many years now, that Mr. Ash was equally touchy about; the cuspidors had to be kept fresh and sparkling.

Roy M. Bates, Allen County historian, remembers the store very well--he was a handyman there for five years. On occasion, he even found time to wash and polish the boss's Overland roadster, which was garnished with brass headlamps, brass running lights, brass windshield frame and support rods. These had to shine like the spittoons.

The Columbia Street businessmen usually got the day started while stroking their chins. The store boys were dispatched to the nearest barbers for tickets--there was to be no time wasted in barbershops. By hook or crook, these enterprising young men always had to know when their bosses' numbers were about to turn up.

The Wayne (now Rosemarie) Hotel employed thirteen barbers and they were busy from morning until night. These shops, had their "boys" too--lather boys. A fellow started the barber trade then by learning to apply lather. Most of the Columbia customers had their own cups with gold initials and brushes in the barbershops of their choice. It was unthought-of for a businessman to shave at home.

Hoff BrauHouse was a stone's toss away from the

Ash store on the southeast corner of Calhoun and Columbia. Proprietor Harry Wiebke made the establishment famous throughout the Midwest. It was a picturesque place with a timbered exterior borrowed from Nuremberg and lush accommodations for private dinner parties. The Hoff Brau got fifty cents for a club sandwich when king-sized hamburgers were selling for a nickel.

To the east, in sequence, were a brave little middle class restaurant, the Scheiffer shoe store, the B. R. Noll drug store, Pickard house furnishing company, the Ash store and finally the City Rescue Mission whose tenants on a late Saturday night must have been frustrating to the meticulous Mr. Ash.

Not far away Andy and Jesse Brosius opened the city's first Ford agency although their showroom was little more than a "hole in the wall."

Columbia Street was tolerant of its minority patrons who asked nothing more than a bare existence. For years the street was home for two men who mixed cunning with panhandling and spent their nights in a curious hideaway under the south arch of the Clinton Street Bridge.

One answered to the name of "Neversweat" and the other, Jeff. Something tragic had happened to Jeff--he was a highly educated man and former school teacher.

Their artifices were jig-dancing in the barber-shops or hammering out crude and sometimes meaningless articles which could be peddled for a pittance. They combed the butcher shops for meat scraps and "gleaned" stray onions and potatoes from the produce houses.

They wined on flavoring extract and the juices they could squeeze from canned heating pastes.

Even so, they never got reckless until the first snow came to Columbia Street. Then they got out of line just enough to merit county penal farm sentences that provided food and shelter during cold weather. For winters on end, Neversweat tended the penal farm poultry and Jeff the swine.

They were proud of their summer home under

the bridge, and an invitation to visit it was a mark of esteem they rarely showed their fellowmen.

There were others of similar ambition but far less skilled in the art of panhandling. Jeff and Neversweat were fixtures and won for themselves, if nothing more, a fondness in memory that likely would surprise them. They were part of the color that has left Columbia's cheek.

THE CITY'S FIRST PULSE THROBBED ON COLUMBIA

Columbia Street, the cradle of metropolitan Fort Wayne, leaves only one block of itself to remind how a community grew out of the wagon tracks.

The Landing, which captures the old atmosphere, is all that remains of the city's birthright.

Columbia Street was never intended to spawn a great Hoosier city; John T. Barr, Baltimore merchant and wealthy John McCorkle of Piqua, Ohio thought Main Street would be main street when they platted the village in 1823 after buying what is now the center of the city for \$1.25 an acre.

But these enterprising gentlemen did not know that nine years later thousands of immigrant laborers would start digging a waterway to connect Lake Erie with interior Indiana. The Wabash and Erie Canal commissioners chose Columbia Street for its frontage. Thus Main Street lost out as the flower of commerce.

However, the real origin of Columbia Street was rooted in savagery: it developed from a side trail of greatest convenience to the old fort. Its original eastern terminus, Lafayette Street, was at the threshold of the stockade. It became the line of demarcation between the tomahawk and the business ledger.

This story of Columbia Street, never fully covered in narrative, is drawn from the archives of Roy M. Bates, Fort Wayne and Allen County historian who has spent years documenting the subject. Along its five-block length occurred more "firsts" in the devel-

opment of a community than perhaps can be attributed to any other street.

Its history was so intense during the developing years that 60 per cent of the facts concerning it have been lost to research, Bates believes. At least 2,500 businesses have come to Columbia Street, and gone.

The chronology of business along the street became a babel. The street numbering system began east to west, was reversed in later years and finally split east and west at Calhoun Street. In some instances, business houses bore two sets of numbers.

Three famous old buildings gave Columbia Street an identity as far back as 1820--the Samuel Hanna log trading post built in that year, Alexander Ewing House (Washington Hall) which made its appearance two years later and the Suttentfield Tavern, 1823, all at the intersection of Barr and Columbia streets. They served as town meeting places and the first function of municipal government began there.

During its busy life, covering nearly a century and a half, not a single lot along the street escaped the ravages of fire. Estimating conservatively, Bates thinks the sum of these losses down through the years represented the destruction of at least one-fourth of the modern Fort Wayne.

The structures of brick and stone which rose over the busy thoroughfare bore the ornate architectural garnish of the period. What remains of Columbia Street has been described as the most architecturally consistent in the city, and is the last street bearing any resemblance to the remembered past.

"It is interesting to leisurely visit the street and carefully observe its aging structures with their cast iron fronts, roof adornments and upper windows of yesterday's gaunt design," Bates points out.

Buildings on the north side of Columbia actually fronted on the canal but for years their finery was wasted on an alley used for deliveries.

The existence of Columbia Street cannot be separated from four pioneer forts, the sites of which are all within the corporate limits of the city. The first French fort was built about 1700 just west of the

present Van Buren Street Bridge about the time the capitol of the Miami nation, Kekionga, was established in what is now Lakeside. The commandant of this first military stronghold, known as Post Miami, was Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes. This fortification was burned by the Indians in 1747. A second French fort was built by M. de Raimond on a new site overlooking the St. Joseph River near what is now Delaware Avenue. Occupied in 1750, the stockade was taken over by the British in 1760 near the close of the French and Indian War.

The first American fort was fabricated from wilderness materials in September, 1794 near what was the east end of Columbia Street--some of the stockade was in the path of the Wabash and Erie Canal. It was named after the builder, General Anthony Wayne, who shattered Indian resistance in the old Northwest Territory, and the name remained with the community that sprang up in its shelter.

The second American fort, constructed in 1800 by Col. Thomas Hunt, stood at the present intersection of Main and Clay streets, and for a time the two fortifications stood a block apart.

The military influence upon the city ceased in 1819 when the troops withdrew, leaving the lonesome community to fend for itself. It was incorporated as a town in 1829 and as a city in 1841.

Land offered by the government went on sale at Washington Hall or Ewing's Tavern in October, 1823. Since the first court house did not make an appearance until 1831, the business of the County Commissioners and Allen Circuit Court was conducted in Washington Hall.

Samuel Hanna's trading post served as the first post office, and Hanna was instrumental in development of the canal through the city. It was an advantage, of course, to have the waterway parallel Columbia Street.

Strangely, the street that was to flourish so abundantly took its name from a hawk-nosed hotel proprietor, Dana Columbia; obviously he was of a personality that made a deep impression upon the growing community and his twenty-two room hostelry

which stood on the site of the Wayne (now Rosemarie) Hotel was a popular gathering place.

Twice during the middle of the 19th Century flood waters invaded Columbia Street. In the spring of 1844 rainfall was so heavy that water collected on both sides of the canal and the street itself became a morass where people sank to their knees in muck. This catastrophe led Isaac D. G. Nelson to finance the manufacture of tile so the land of the area could be drained.

In May, 1851 heavy rains again flooded the central city and canalboats floated off into the streets in the vicinity of Columbia and Harrison streets.

The confusion of record concerning Columbia Street began January 21, 1851 when an ordinance was passed to number business houses westward, beginning at Lafayette Street. On October 29, 1859 the City Council ordered the numbering to proceed from Harrison Street eastward and the climax came November 8, 1871 when a final renumbering was ordered east and west from Calhoun Street.

The wear and tear that came to Columbia Street also is evidenced by records of the City Council. The planking of the street was authorized in April, 1853 and on June 25, 1879 legislators noted the street had been graded between Barr and Lafayette streets.

A trial pavement of Nicholson block was ordered for the intersection of Clinton and Columbia on April 27, 1864 and the following August 24 a contract for this type of paving was awarded to B. H. Kimball & Company, Chicago, at \$2.60 a square yard. The street squirmed a little at progress because on September 14 of that year a contract for that part of the work between Calhoun and Barr streets was in controversy. On October 2, 1865, three blocks of Nicholson Block paving were completed on Columbia.

Complete repaving of Columbia with shale block was ordered August 6, 1909 and over this eventually applied the modern asphalt treatment.

An omnibus service came to the street September 5, 1859 under a contract that provided six round trips daily over all planked streets of the city, the fares being five and ten cents.

Columbia Street again reneged at progress in the form of a remonstrance against a streetcar line being laid; merchants believed the noise and movement of the cars would discourage horse-drawn traffic.

Merchants finally acquiesced for on March 5, 1892 rails and cars for the Columbia and Lakeside Street Railway were ordered.

Lakesiders followed up with a remonstrance against placing the track at one side of the street on June 10, 1892--four blocks of the track already had been laid.

The first shipment of three electric streetcars arrived on June 17, 1892 and soon the clang of the trolley was added to the commercial hubbub of Columbia Street.

FLAMES DID THEIR BEST TO DESTROY COLUMBIA STREET

Columbia Street's five-block stretch of industry and merchandising always held doggedly to the tenet of business as usual despite a plague of fires that began in 1849 and persisted until today.

More smoke from Columbia Street business disasters darkened the Fort Wayne skies than along any other local business thoroughfare.

The first recorded conflagration, during the summer of 1849, destroyed an entire block of fifteen business houses on Columbia and Main streets, westward from Calhoun. The fire started in mid-block on the west side of Calhoun Street and spread with the prevailing winds.

On the heels of this waste came Fort Wayne's first official fire limit which made illegal the construction of wooden buildings within that area bounded by the Wabash and Erie Canal (just north of Columbia), Main, Barr and Harrison streets; the business heartland of the city at that time.

Fort Wayne's first fire department had been

formed in 1834, consisting of a muscle-powered engine company, a hose company and a hook and ladder unit. This fire-fighting cluster was organized into the Anthony Waynes in 1841. Each house was required to supply its own fire buckets.

By October 31, 1865 nine fire cisterns, filled at considerable expense from the canal, had been constructed in the business district. Already several had been excavated under Columbia Street. As late as 1881 a man fell into the cistern at Lafayette and Columbia streets and drowned. Those not particularly concerned with fire safety, good health or the law surreptitiously drew their water supply from these cisterns.

On February 28, 1897 fire wiped out the Morgan & Beach Hardware housed in the Morgan Building (10-21 East Columbia Street) causing between \$125,000 and \$150,000 loss. This time the flames spread to the Nathan, Kircheimer & Company wholesale paper house, the Romary Goeplein hardware store and westward to Julius Nathan wholesale liquors and the stove and tin-ware business of Alexander Staub. The west wall of the Morgan Building collapsed after the fire, adding to the loss.

Another assault upon "business as usual" came December 27, 1899 when flames destroyed the wholesale and retail dry goods of George Dewald & Company and the Mathias F. Kaag chinaware store both housed in a four-story building on the northeast corner of Calhoun and Columbia streets.

At the time the DeWald Building was a Fort Wayne landmark; Robert T. DeWald, president of the firm, announced the building would be torn down and replaced and temporary quarters were opened in the Baltes Block, southeast corner of Berry and Harrison streets--later the site of famous Berghoff Gardens. Kaag later purchased and assumed management of the H. Ward crockery business at 8 West Columbia Street. The fire loss was estimated at \$225,000.

There was a respite until February 5, 1905 when flames ravaged the Weil Building on the north side of Columbia between Barr and Lafayette streets, wiping

out the shirtwaist plant of Paragon Manufacturing Company which had leased the premises in 1894. Four days after the fire Charles MacDougal, owner of Paragon, announced the firm would move to new leased quarters at 825-27 South Barr Street. The Weil Building was rebuilt.

The \$150,000 Mayflower Mills fire on May 21, 1911 is still remembered and this firm left Columbia Street, building a new plant at Leesburg Road and the Nickel Plate Road (now Norfolk & Western). The milling plant on the site of the present Fisher Brothers Building was destroyed. Bates remembers stopping to watch the fire-fighting on his way home from Sunday School.

The last of the great Columbia Street fires occurred in 1957 and destroyed the Fort Wayne Waste-paper Company, a building formerly housing the Globe Mills and later the Globe Printing Company, on the northeast corner of Barr and Columbia streets. There were many other lesser fires.

Columbia Street "first" in the development of the present community dates back to 1820 when the first post office was established on the northwest corner of Barr and Columbia--the Barnett & Hanna Trading Post where Samuel Hanna served as first postmaster.

The first hotel (Washington Hall) was built by Alexander Ewing on the southwest corner of Columbia and Barr. It was also called Ewing's Tavern.

Organization of Allen County occurred on December 17, 1823 in Washington Hall and the county seat selected effective April 1, 1824.

First session of the County Commissioners was held May 26, 1824 in Washington Hall.

First session of the Circuit Court, August 9, 1824 also convened in Washington Hall and court continued there until the first court house was built in 1831.

The city's first brick structure was erected in September, 1824 at 205 East Columbia by James Barnett and the last occupant, after a long tenure, was the Schweeters Bakery which quit business in 1907. The building near the northwest corner of Columbia

and Clinton was razed a year later.

The first Masonic building appeared in 1830 and was used by Wayne Lodge No.25. This Masonic building also housed the city's first newspaper, "The Sentinel"; Thomas Tigar was the original editor and the printing was done on a 500-pound hand press brought from Indianapolis by horse and wagon.

Fort Wayne Branch, Indiana State Bank was the first to begin banking in the city in the home of Francis Comparet on the south side of the street between Calhoun and Harrison. Hugh McCulloch, who later became first U. S. comptroller of the currency, was cashier and manager.

The first telegraph line from Toledo to Fort Wayne was wired into the Fort Wayne Times office, northwest corner of Columbia and Clinton, in 1848.

Fort Wayne's first glimpse of a railroad locomotive occurred at the Comparet canal basin, Columbia and Lafayette streets in 1852; the engine was brought here by canalboat to aid in construction of the Ohio and Indiana Railroad; this event proved to be the death knell of the thriving waterway.

The first railway station was erected in 1853 on the northwest corner of Columbia and Lafayette--years afterward the site of the City Rescue Mission. The railroad ran up Lafayette Street and the freight house and yards extended almost to Clinton Street.

Edward F. Colerick erected the first theater and meeting house in 1853, and it was converted into an opera house in 1864. Known as Colerick Hall, it was destroyed by fire in 1881. It was on the north side of the street between Clinton and Barr.

The first mail into the city by rail in 1885 was delivered into the Columbia Street station; recipient of the first letter was Royal Taylor.

The city's first public bathhouse was established May 27, 1859, by Edward Colerick on the first floor of the opera house; admittance was twenty-five cents.

Ice cream was introduced here in 1879 at the John G. Maier Grocery on Columbia Street between Calhoun and Clinton.

The first teletype (then called writing telegraph)

was set up and operated in the lobby of the Wayne (now Rosemarie) Hotel on April 11, 1891.

Fort Wayne's first hydraulic barber chair made its appearance in the barbershop of what is now the Rosemarie Hotel, December 29, 1899.

THE OLD CANAL FINALLY DRIED UP, BUT COLUMBIA STREET KEPT ON!

The Wabash and Erie Canal, the longest inland waterway ever excavated by man, gave Columbia Street a commercial sweep of 350 miles.

It brought riches to a five-block business thoroughfare which in turn nourished the development of Fort Wayne into a great Midwestern city.

The canal never actually tapped Lake Erie as its name indicates: it stretched from the Miami and Erie Canal at Junction City, southwest of Defiance, Ohio to Evansville. From Junction City (or Junction as the meeting of the waterways often was called) the Wabash and Erie traffic could veer either northward to Toledo or southward to Cincinnati.

Fort Wayne was distinguished as the highest level on the canal. Technically referred to as the "summit level" the highest point extended from Glasgow Avenue westward through the city to the present Fort Wayne Country Club. A lock at each end of the summit level defined the stretch. The canalboats from the east were locked upward into Fort Wayne, and downward to points west of the city.

Congress ordered a survey of lands for the canal May 26, 1824 and in February, 1826 a Board of Canal Commissioners was appointed. The first commissioners were David Burr, Samuel Hanna and Robert Johns, all appointed by the state. Jessie L. Williams was named chief engineer for the project.

First of the gigantic earth movements along the canal began in Fort Wayne on February 22, 1832: the first channel cut was the feeder canal which tapped

the St. Joseph River six miles north of the city where Robison Park later blossomed. It joined the main channel of the canal near the former Wayne Knitting Mills complex on West Main Street. This feeder brought water to supply the main canal.

The construction work itself brought a new, sturdy population to the Wabash Valley--thousands of Irish immigrants who cut the channel of the canal with hand tools.

The first construction contract on the canal proper was awarded in June, 1832, for a fifteen-mile section through the summit level.

The U. S. government gave Ohio and Indiana alternating sections of land along the route and sales of these properties helped finance construction. Land sales boomed in Fort Wayne area and a shantytown for canal workers and their families stretched westward from the intersection of Calhoun and Berry streets.

Canal traffic between Fort Wayne and Huntington began July 4, 1835 and the completion of the waterway to Lake Erie was celebrated on the same national holiday eight years later.

As early as 1847 the canal was in financial difficulty at the state level because of heavy construction investments that did not pay off. However this had no effect upon traffic. The state sought to recover through the issuance of depreciated script known as "white dog."

The state's financial embarrassment over the canal led to an 1851 constitutional provision limiting the bonded indebtedness of governmental units which remains effective today.

In 1849 a steam-powered packet cruised from Toledo to Fort Wayne and several such boats made their appearance later. It is likely the wash from their propellers caused rapid deterioration of the canal banks. The steamer "John Good" made her trial trip in 1863: she was built in Roanoke by Captain Van Becker and her machinery was produced by the Fort Wayne Machine Works. She had a cruising speed of six miles an hour. The same year another steamer "King

Brothers" was entrusted to command of Captain Donovan and a third, the "St. Joe," began moving freight over the feeder canal and the St. Joe River to Leo.

But at no time during the history of the canal, which ended on July 19, 1875, was the waterway completely open to traffic from Junction City to Evansville. Collapse of the earthen banks and accumulations of silt were always blocking the passage of vessels at some point along the channel.

The most heavily-traveled portion of the waterway was between Peru, Fort Wayne and Junction. For years Fort Wayne depended upon the canal for fire protection and the handling of water power rights along the channel at one time approached a public scandal. When the winter freeze came, the canal supplied ice for the next summer's crude refrigeration.

In 1872 critics of the canal management claimed that the annual water power revenues of the waterways, averaging between \$4,000 and \$6,000, were only half of what they should have been. They further argued that inroads of the railroads were being used as an excuse for the meager revenues of the waterway.

During October of that year, 721 boats carrying cargoes valued at \$1,208,000 moved up and down the canal.

Rafts of black walnut timber were floated down the canal to various mills and pleasure craft, largely with young people aboard, made frequent use of the waterway. But penalties were enforced for swimming or bathing in the canal.

Downtown bridges across the canal were a frequent source of trouble and expense: in 1856 the center span of the Harrison Street bridge over the Orbison Basin collapsed under the weight of a circus band wagon. No lives were lost.

Funds were voted for a pivot bridge over the canal at Calhoun Street in 1859 and the Barr Street span was closed for repairs. Barr Street finally was served by a pivot bridge and in 1863 the Harrison Street span was replaced by a swing bridge and street-level docking area.

During a committee meeting in Lafayette on February 3-4, 1874 it was decided the canal should be abandoned. A year later, canal commissioners asked an appropriation of \$10,000 for the repair of locks, aqueducts and other equipment: the Indiana General Assembly in 1873 authorized counties served by the waterway to appropriate up to \$10,000 for maintenance purposes.

Finally on July 19, 1875, the state having defaulted the payment of interest on bonds, the canal was ordered sold to pay the bondholders whose investments totaled \$10 million.

Judge Gookins of Terre Haute was named to conduct the sale which drew a number of bidders on February 24, 1876. Jonathan E. Gapin of Terre Haute bought the right-of-way from Lafayette to the Ohio State Line for \$85,500. Meanwhile, the United States Senate had taken steps to prevent sale of the property. The canal property through Allen County brought only \$650.

On March 31, 1876 the canal right-of-way from the feeder dam at Lagro to the Indiana-Ohio state line was purchased for \$44,500 by William Fleming of Fort Wayne, William Dolan, C. B. Knowlton, J. W. Dritt and C. H. Shirk. This later became the right-of-way of the Nickel Plate (Norfolk & Western) Railroad.

But business, now firmly established on Columbia Street, went on as usual.

COLUMBIA STREET FLIRTED WITH THE RAILROADS

When the Wabash and Erie Canal, which brought life and prestige to Columbia Street, died in a welter of mud in 1876, the unsightly 468-mile ditch became a strange battleground for aggressive railroad tycoons.

Columbia Street already was flirting with the railroads and the death of the waterway only put her alongside what was to become one of the fastest freight

lines into the portal of the West.

A country newspaper editor called it the "Nickel Plated Railroad" and the name (Nickel Plate Railroad) stuck until a few years ago. It is now a part of the Norfolk & Western system.

Columbia Street even had the power to challenge the wealth and influence that proposed that the railroad be laid between her curbing. Railroad interests settled for the canal route through Fort Wayne: making the fill was an expense they had hoped to avoid.

The new railroad, first known as the New York, Chicago and St. Louis, posed a serious threat to the William H. Vanderbilt interests: a parallel competitor to his Lake Shore and Michigan Southern, which later became part of the New York Central. The Nickel Plate ballast had hardly settled when Vanderbilt acquired a controlling interest.

The canal bed had become rather a headache to Columbia Street in 1876. The great basin at Harrison Street was being filled in for real estate development; the feeder dam at what was later Robison Park collapsed the following year; and in 1880 the canal bank gave way at Clinton Street, flooding basements and carrying away a timber sewer in which the city took great pride. The sewer was replaced with a brick structure.

These things were a discouragement to "friends of the canal" who in 1879 held a convention in Huntington and discussed the possibilities of resuming navigation on the waterway between the Wabash River and Lake Erie. The canal at Logansport already had been filled in.

The waterway was in receivership and rumors flew that private owners of the canal right-of-way were conniving with the railroad interests. True or not, fifty-six miles of the canal property were sold to the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad February 12, 1881--just three days after the Wabash Railroad made overtures to buy certain sections of abandoned waterway.

The last cargoes of the few remaining canal-boats were dirt, moved unceremoniously to the larger

fills.

Articles of consolidation of several railroads with the New York, Chicago & St. Louis were filed April 9, 1881 with the Indiana Secretary of State. The capital stock amounted to \$35 million and William Fleming was one of the directors.

Track laying to the west was begun at the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad near the Ortt residence now occupied by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Water rights of the canal and additional right-of-way were acquired for \$50,000 by the new railroad the following April 20.

By the middle of June, 1881 fill-in operations along the canal became widespread and on July 26 the State Treasurer paid off \$135,000 in canal bonds issued 25 years earlier.

The transformation of the canal brought exciting days to Columbia Street. Construction trains began snorting to and fro where the canal had been and lawyers pressed condemnation suits against farmers for right-of-way needed in the New Haven area and west of Fort Wayne. The railroad was offering from \$200 to \$250 an acre for the land while the owners requested as high as \$850 for three-quarters of an acre.

By September 20 much of the track had been laid between Fostoria, Ohio and Fort Wayne: track layers eventually followed the crews who filled in the canal at the rate of about a mile a day. It was a much easier task to obliterate the old waterway than to lay rail for the new system.

The first train arrived in the city from Fostoria on November 3, 1881, and the most important passenger was D. R. Gibson, a right-of-way agent for the railroad, dispatched here to expedite the legal difficulties.

But progress was not justified by all who shared in it. A referendum on the sum of \$25,000 to establish the railroad shops in Adams Township failed on May 15, 1882 and the shops were awarded to Chicago. On May 19, 1882 officials of the railroad decided upon a depot location at Calhoun Street, and a contract for building the structure which served until 1967, was

awarded on August 28, 1882. The cost was \$12,000.

The preceding June 4 the railroad spent \$25,000 for 15 acres between the canal and what is now the Lake Erie and Western Railroad for a track yard, repair shop and roundhouse.

So rapidly had the railroad line developed that most of the trackage between Buffalo, New York, and Chicago was complete when the building of the local depot was started. The cost was vaguely estimated at between \$25 and \$29 million. The first passenger train over the new road from Chicago arrived in Fort Wayne at 10:55 a.m., August 30, 1882 and 500 citizens gathered at the station to witness the inauguration of regular passenger service the following October 23. Three days later the Vanderbilt interests stepped into the financial limelight of the Nickel Plate Road. An old stone building on Superior Street, constructed in 1852 to serve the canal, was eyed by the railroad as a dispatcher's office and a new slate roof was ordered for the structure. This building still remains owned by the City of Fort Wayne. Efforts are being made to preserve it as a landmark of early Fort Wayne transportation history.

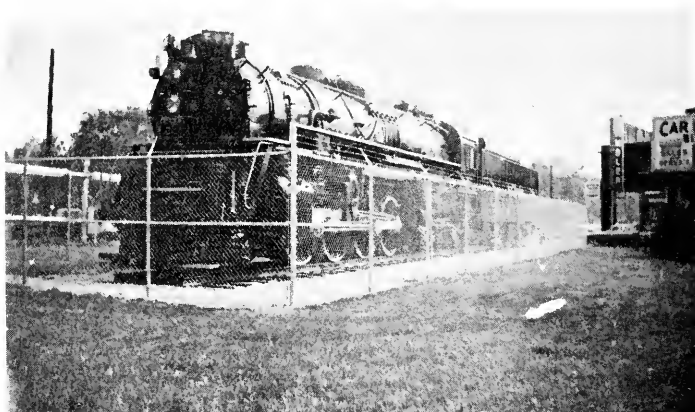
Residents of the Nebraska district rejoiced on February 6, 1893 when a Nickel Plate crew demolished the famous old canal aqueduct over the St. Mary's River. Residents had threatened to blow up the abandoned structure, claiming that it dammed up water which filtered into their basements.

When the VanSweringens assumed control of the Nickel Plate in 1916, John J. Bernet was named president. In six years he doubled the gross revenue of the line. In 1923 the Nickel Plate absorbed the Clover Leaf and the Lake Erie and Western railroads.

Bernet accepted the presidency of the Erie Railroad in 1926 but returned to the Nickel Plate in 1933. It was Bernet who developed the 2-8-4 Berkshire locomotive which proved to be the most efficient steam power ever developed for fast freight service.

Between 1951 and 1954 the railroad experimented with diesel-electric locomotives which were to replace steam power. The Nickel Plate elevation through Fort

Wayne followed in 1955 and 1956.



June 1963 — Nickel Plate R.R. Locomotive #767 a Berkshire type engine used in the NKP R R'S high speed freight service. This particular locomotive now on display at Fourth and Clinton streets, broke the ribbon dedicating the elevation of Nickel Plate tracks in Fort Wayne in 1955.

(photographer unknown).

The last steam passenger run through Fort Wayne was made by a 14-car special made up in the East Wayne yards with the LaSalle Street station in Chicago as its terminal.

The Nickel Plate was acquired by the Norfolk & Western Railroad October 16, 1964, a line dating back to 1838 with general offices in Roanoke, Virginia.

AFFLUENT COLUMBIA STREET ELBOWED INTO LAKESIDE

While enterprise and affluence paid court, Columbia Street wrested not only the business heart away from Main Street, but a bridge into the Lakeside residential area as well.

This was a period before the turn of the century that Historian Roy M. Bates refers to as the "battle of the bridges." The present Three Rivers high-rise apartments mark the scene: the time was 1889.

The first bridge was raised across the Maumee there in 1812 giving the fort complex entry to an orchard property which later became Lakeside. It was a crude timber structure which somehow found support in the riverbed. The county replaced this span in 1863 with another wood span which had stone abutments and a stone support in the center of the stream.

Around this bridge a controversy, explosive legally and in other ways, began swirling on April 15, 1889. As a result Columbia Street moved as far eastward as it could--to the bank of the Maumee.

After the military abandoned the second fort property in 1819, first business activity began to blossom on Columbia Street between Barr and Lafayette streets. Beyond Lafayette Street was a flood plain which with the arrival of the Wabash and Erie Canal was converted into the Comparet Basin, where canalboats could turn and there were special facilities for special cargo loadings and unloadings and also docks for repair of the boats themselves.

The only bridge to serve Columbia Street during its history involved a huge earthen fill and causeway through the lowlands. This earth movement created the fourth block of East Columbia Street to connect with Clay Street. Six or eight business buildings followed, adjacent to the confluence of the rivers and the first of these was the Hanna-Breckenridge factory, a gaunt three-story frame structure on the north side of the street.

The "battle of the bridges" actually began when

fire heavily damaged the Main Street bridge into Lakeside on December 21, 1888. Temporary repairs were completed in two weeks. On January 12 the county commissioners proposed construction of a new bridge across the Maumee River and made suggestions for its location.

On April 15, 1889, city officials decided the new bridge should be built at Columbia Street, just east of Clay Street. They accordingly began to assess potential benefits and damages.

The battle of the bridges was on.

J. George Strodel and others filed a suit in Allen Circuit Court June 15, 1889 to mandate the county commissioners to condemn the old Main Street Bridge and erect a new one on this site.

This brought on an injunction action in the name of Louis Brames which was venued to DeKalb Court and eventually heard by a jury beginning August 10, 1889. The Columbia and Main Street factions were well represented.

The jurors voted in favor of the Main Street Bridge, recommending that it be repaired. However Judge Stephen A. Powers found a technicality for a decision of his own.

A month later, he ruled in favor of a new bridge, and on the same day County Attorney Samuel R. Alden filed an opinion on the matter along with engineering data. On the heels of this legal procedure, the county commissioners made their final decision and ordered the construction of a 300-foot steel span across the Maumee at Columbia Street. It had a 24-foot roadway and 5-foot sidewalks on each side.

The new bridge, which closely resembled the recently replaced Anthony Boulevard bridge, contained 350 tons of steel. The structure was completed on December 2, 1890 and the Fort Wayne Land and Improvement Company petitioned the county commissioners to remove the old Main Street span.

The day before Christmas, 1890 an attempt was made to dynamite the old Main Street bridge; several attempts also had been made to destroy it by fire.

Out of concern over these acts of vandalism,

the commissioners on March 18, 1891 ordered the bridge removed and on the following June 22 the north abutment of the old bridge was removed and the river deepened to lessen flood dangers. On January 26, 1893



The New Steel Columbia Street
Bridge of 1890

the pier of the old bridge in the center of the river was removed to eliminate future ice jams in the stream.

Thus, Columbia Street won the "battle of the bridges" but its days as the main business artery of the community were numbered. For seventy years Columbia Street had developed from the old flood plain westward. The final spurt of influence occurred during the bridge controversy which lengthened the street one block to the east.

The scene of the "battle of the bridges" had been completely changed; the fourth block of East Columbia

Street is now occupied by the Three Rivers Apartments and Lafayette Street has been connected with Spy Run Avenue to the north, providing a heavily-traveled through street. Spy Run used to be Avenue of the Circuses coming to the city and the heavily-shod draft horses used to strike sparks from the old brick paving.

This was an unusual and turbulent phase of the development of the city, but Columbia Street is not known for the bridge it won. During the waning years it was commonly referred to as "the waterfront"--why, most people didn't know.

MILITARY TRAIL FORCED CITY OFF THE COMPASS

Columbia Street not only primed the metropolitan development but forced the downtown business district out of kilter with the points of the compass as well.

Most people have noticed the streets between Superior and Lewis streets run northeast and southwest: surveyors who laid out the city below Lewis corrected the angles to true north, south, east and west.

This tilt was caused by a well-marked trail leaving the old forts at the headwaters of the Maumee River toward Fort Dearborn, (Chicago) which did not run true east and west.

When John Barr and John McCorkle, the city's first real estate developers, platted the primitive downtown section, buildings that had made their appearance along the trail from the fort presented a problem. It was far easier to use the trail as a base line than to try to negotiate moving the buildings. The intersecting streets were accordingly laid out at right angles.

Strangely, Barr and McCorkle expected Main Street to become the main business thoroughfare, but the Wabash and Erie Canal favored the development of

Columbia Street instead.

The northwest trail, which later became Columbia Street, angled across the site of the present Central Fire Station, then straightened into a northwest course.

Seven buildings were constructed in the fourth block of East Columbia, ending at the river, during its comparatively short life. On the north side of the street were the Foster shirtwaist factory, a business that was to gain national prominence; The Banner Laundry; Brinkman Sign Company; the Furnas Ice Cream Company (later Borden); and earlier the Hanna-Breckenridge plant.

Erected on the south side of that block were the A.H. Perfect & Company building and the Pettit Transfer & Storage Company.



The 400 block of East Columbia Street

The shirtwaist mill, founded by Samuel M. Foster, a New Yorker, was established on a new site adjacent to the Nickel Plate Railroad in September, 1888 and employed about 300 women and girls. A year after the plant was moved to Columbia Street it was closed by a strike which lasted only a few days. The business flourished and following a reorganization on August 4, 1905 became known as the Samuel M. Foster Company. Many of the older employees acquired an interest in the firm which became one of the leading mills of its kind in the country.

Foster also founded the German-American Bank which later became the Lincoln National Bank & Trust Company, and he was the first president of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company. At one time he was president of the Wayne Knitting Mills and a brother, Col. David N. Foster became fathers of the present Fort Wayne park system through the donation of land for Foster Park.

After the Foster mill closed, the building was used as a warehouse for years by the Wolf & Dessauer Department Store. It was torn down in 1964.

Neighboring to the east stood the Brinkman Sign Company. This corporation moved to Industrial Park when downtown redevelopment began. The last building on the north side of the street was the home of the Furnas Ice Cream Company, which in recent years became a part of the Borden complex. This firm has moved to a location on Wells Street.

Development of the south side of the 400 block east came in two packages in 1909. On June 24 Fisher Brothers Paper Company entered contract with General Construction Company to build a three-story reinforced concrete storage building on the southwest corner of Clay and Columbia. It cost \$27,000 and was leased to A. H. Perfect & Company, a wholesale grocery firm organized in 1896 by Arthur H. Perfect, Harry A. Perfect, T. Guy Perfect and Henry H. Eavey. The Perfect firm finally moved to a new location on the Nelson Road and the structure was leased as a warehouse by the former Grand Leader Company.

William L. Pettit Jr., a native of Fort Wayne

and graduate of Lehigh University, established the Pettit Transfer & Storage Company after serving as a surveyor for the Pennsylvania Railroad and subsequently operating his own blueprint business in Minneapolis. A contract for erecting a six-story reinforced concrete warehouse building at 414 East Columbia was awarded the Indiana Construction Company on May 1, 1909.

This was the second reinforced concrete structure to make its appearance in the city: the first was the Shoaff Building, now the Gettle Building.

In 1970 the Pettit firm observed its 60th anniversary. Joseph Pettit, son of the founder, now manages the business and the firm's volume recently required the erection of a building in Industrial Park with 20,000 square feet of floor space.

Early in 1962 the Three Rivers Redevelopment Project acquired a 7 1/2 acre triangular area that involved the 400 block east, the same block of east Superior Street and extending southward to near Main Street. This represented an investment of nearly half a million dollars, and some of the property was acquired from M. H. Foster estate through the Lincoln National Bank & Trust Company as trustee. On this triangular site was erected the 14-story high-rise apartment complex.

The Borden building disappeared from the scene in 1963 and the Foster structure followed in 1964. The former Perfect Building was razed that year and early in 1965 the township trustee's headquarters and the Brinkman building were eliminated.

Work was started on the high-rise apartment buildings in 1965 and they were ready for occupancy in 1967. Various redevelopment projects eliminated all of once powerful Columbia Street except the lone block between Calhoun and Harrison streets which has been redeveloped as The Landing--reminiscent of the old canal docking area.

A MAGNETISM BROUGHT THE RAILROAD

Together, the Wabash and Erie Canal and Columbia Street set up a commercial magnetism that attracted a railroad line from Pittsburgh.

The railroad soon outmoded the canal and finally the seemingly insignificant relocation of a railroad terminal broke the spell that had made Columbia Street the city's main artery of business.

That is how the business district moved southward.

Although the canal brought development to Fort Wayne, it took less than a decade to prove that the waterway would never be a financial success; it was always losing money though traffic was deceptively heavy.

Jesse L. Williams, a brilliant man and chief engineer of the canal construction, had visions of a railroad line connecting Pittsburgh and Chicago. Before he could apply himself to the venture, three separate railroads became involved in the projection of rails through Fort Wayne from Pittsburgh to Chicago: the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad which ended at Crestline, Ohio; the Ohio and Indiana Railroad from Crestline to Fort Wayne; and the Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad.

Oddly enough, the financial panic of 1857 forced a merger of these railroads into the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad which eventually became a leasor in the Pennsylvania Railroad, currently the Penn-Central.

The early railroads, and even the toll roads, set their courses for terminals on Columbia Street. The Ohio and Indiana and Fort Wayne and Chicago railroads formed almost a direct line through the city. However, the tracks were laid up Lafayette Street to a terminal on Columbia Street between Barr and Lafayette streets; the first rail complex consisted of a station, freight house and engine shed.

A contract for laying the Ohio and Indiana Railroad from Fort Wayne to Crestline was awarded July 4, 1850, (the company was organized at Bucyrus, Ohio)

and the first locomotive came to the city on a canal flatboat. It was used for construction work on the Fort Wayne section of the railroad and then was pressed into passenger service.

Ground for the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad was broken July 4, 1849 and the organization of the Ohio and Indiana came one year later.

Organization of the Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad was effected at Warsaw in 1852 and four years elapsed before the tracks connected Fort Wayne and Columbia City. The panic of 1857 found the railroads in dire financial shape, particularly the Fort Wayne and Chicago line.

This was a crisis for the genius of canal engineer Williams who drummed up financial aid from the counties crossed by the railroad and the line finally was completed to Chicago, connecting the 450 miles of rails between Pittsburgh and Chicago.

The first excursion train rolled into Fort Wayne over the Ohio and Indiana on November 15, 1854 and the passengers trudged through the mud of Columbia Street to Colerick Hall for a celebration. The way was lighted only by the glow from store windows.

A newspaperman, Robert D. Dumm, commented: "Upon our arrival at Colerick Hall we were bade welcome and when our eyes fell upon the most sumptuous of viands, we forgot the difficulties encountered in our tramp from the depot and could but admit the open-hearted hospitality of our reception."

The prestige of Columbia Street was undermined February 9, 1857 when it was decided to discontinue rail shuttle service up Lafayette Street, and the terminal, freight house and engine house were removed. The Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad erected a brick terminal on its main line between Calhoun and Clinton streets (Kanne & Company got the contract) and station house served until 1914 when the present passenger station was erected at Baker and Harrison streets.

A building destined to shelter humanity for a period of 110 years made its appearance on the northwest corner of Lafayette and Columbia streets the

year after the railroad ended its shuttle. It was known far and wide as the City Rescue Mission from 1915 until its demolition in 1968.



Fort Wayne Rescue Home and Mission
343 East Columbia Street

The landmark served as a hotel from 1858 until its acquisition by the Mission; first known as the City House under the management of Fred Volkert until its purchase by George Phillips in 1859 who added a second floor and gave it his name--Phillips House. He operated the hostelry only a short time. Subsequent

proprietors Benjamin C. Pierce, (March 6, 1868); Peter S. Cresenberry (November 8, 1876) and a Mr. France who acquired the property August 24, 1880.

The hotel was known as the Phillips House until about 1888 when the name was changed to Oliver House. It was deteriorated into an establishment of ill repute and the management boldly gave the brick structure a coat of crimson paint in February, 1890.

To improve conditions there, Oliver House was transferred by lease to the Land & Improvement Company and on September 11, 1892 Mrs. Tom Clark became proprietress and the hotel was renamed Arlington House.

Phillips left the hotel business to operate a stage line between Fort Wayne and Maysville, a service he continued until his death November 12, 1896.

The Fort Wayne Rescue Home and Mission was organized in 1903 and began its service at 118 East Columbia Street. Rev. Kenneth A. Hawkins served as superintendent of the mission for more than thirty years and was succeeded by Rev. Charles Dickinson.

In March, 1963 the millionth patron of the Mission was registered for food and lodging.

The venerable building began to show signs of serious deterioration in 1959 and usage was limited to the first two floors.

In 1968 the landmark disappeared from Columbia Street and the Mission was moved to a modern structure at 301 West Superior.

CANAL BASINS DREW INDUSTRY

Two great basins of the Wabash and Erie Canal brought industry to Columbia Street and contributed heavily to the commerce that made it the city's main thoroughfare for many years.

Best known, perhaps, was the Comparet Basin at Lafayette and Columbia serving a milling complex that became one of the country's largest.

At the other end of Columbia Street, near Harrison, was the Orbison Basin, a part of the heritage that is preserved by The Landing--a single block that has been tastefully blended into urban redevelopment.

Both basins were turnabouts for the canalboats and around the perimeters appeared boat yards and other industry.

The Norfolk & Western Railroad cuts directly across the site of the Comparet Basin, named for the three elevators that could process 8,000 bushels of grain daily and a cornsheller-warehouse that could deliver 2,500 bushels of grain per day.

These mills, operated for many years by Joseph and David Comparet, were established before the Civil War and the brothers operated a fleet of grain boats between Fort Wayne and Toledo including the steamer "King Brothers" which made its trial run on May 18, 1863. The mills ceased operation about 1876.

The Comparet interests were served by a spur of the Ohio and Indiana Railroad and when the Columbia Street terminal was moved southward to the main line between Calhoun and Clinton streets, the Comparets enlarged their stables to accommodate 100 horses for transporting their grain to the railroad.

In later years the milling firm was reorganized as Comparet, Hubbell & Company.

On May 31, 1861 a fire destroyed the Comparet flour mill at an estimated loss of \$10,000. The mill, in which new steam power had been installed, was rebuilt.

The entire complex, finally owned by Mr. and Mrs. Lucien P. Stapleford, was reduced to ashes by another fire on December 16, 1876. Destroyed were the old warehouse which had been converted into a stable; a two-story frame structure; the five-story brick mill and a three-story frame structure known as "Comparet House"--operated by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Clark as a hotel for farmers patronizing the mill.

Before the fire, the stable building had been purchased by E. H. Tompkins of New York City. Two canalboats, "The Nile" and the "David Davis," were

lost in the blaze. The total loss, most of it borne by the Staplefords, was estimated at \$37,000. According to record, the frame buildings on the property were erected prior to 1840.

Little is known of the use of the mill site for several years after the fire. For some time a horse barn was operated on the premises by an unidentified businessman.



The Wunderlin Building at the southeast corner of Columbia and Lafayette streets. In the rear is the Pettit Storage Warehouse building. This was the site of the Comparet Mills adjacent to the site of the Comparet Canal Turning Basin. Photo by Sid Pepe.

Early in the 1890s William Wunderlin ended his service with Weil Brothers Company and in 1893 built a two-story brick building on the southeast corner of Lafayette and Columbia where he entered the salvage business for himself. In 1916 he was joined in the business by two sons, Arthur and Elmer, and the firm name was changed to William Wunderlin & Sons in 1921. William Wunderlin died April 23, 1934 at the age of seventy and his sons continued operation of the business.

Elmer Wunderlin died in 1962 and the surviving brother continued to operate the firm until 1967 when the building was razed in the redevelopment of the downtown area. The business had flourished, a third floor was added to the original building in 1923 and there were further expansions after the elevation of the Nickel Plate Road in 1955-56. The firm leased an area for a scrap yard on the south side of the 300 block East Columbia Street. The Wunderlins dealt in hides, wool, scrap iron, rags and other waste material.

What was to become another landmark of the Comparet area was founded on the southwest corner of Lafayette and Columbia about 1895 by Henry F. Bullerman. A native of St. Joseph Township he became involved at twenty in a California gold mining operation.



The "old stone yard" of Haag and Bates Company at the southwest corner of Columbia and Lafayette streets about 1905. H. L. Bates on the left and Charles E. Haag on the right.

Later Bullerman established a stone monument business here and the property for years was known as "the old stone yard." Structurally, it was distin-

guished by an open-sided display area topped by a cupola. Bullerman, the father of six children, formerly resided at 1005 Rivermet Avenue. He served as county commissioner here and for twenty-five years was a township justice of the peace. He also was a secretary-treasurer of the Central Foundry Company and was associated with the Fort Wayne Tile Company. He died in February, 1936 at the age of eighty-six.

Bullerman sold the stone business in 1901 to Henry L. Bates, a native of southern Indiana who learned his craft in the stone quarries of Westport before moving here in 1892. The firm's name was changed to H. L. Bates & Company and a year later he entered a partnership with Charles E. Haag, a stone mason from Stuttgart, Germany and the business assumed the name of Haag and Bates. Haag was a city councilman from 1896 to 1900, and after his death in 1906, Bates entered a partnership with Herman Daler. The firm continued as Bates & Daler Company until December of 1916 when Daler withdrew to establish a motorcycle business.

Immediately, Harold W. Carr became associated with Bates in the business and the firm changed its name to the Bates & Carr Monument Company. During their partnership, the use of pneumatic tools was adopted for stone carving and later sand blasting was introduced. Bates and Carr moved the business to 708 West Washington Boulevard in 1920.

Bates was the father of Roy M. Bates, Fort Wayne and Allen County historian, and during his twenty-seven years in business here, the principal products were granite and marble monuments, headstones and interior marble work for building. Vermont and Georgia quarries were the principal sources of marble and the firm processed granite from Vermont, Missouri, Minnesota, North Carolina and Oklahoma. In later years some granite was imported from Scotland.

Following the death of elderly Bates in 1928, Carr moved the monument business to Hicksville, Ohio and after moving to Defiance was elected to the Ohio State House of Representatives.

The stone yard at Lafayette and Columbia streets was followed by a one-story brick building owned by William Prange and until 1936 several businesses occupied the structure, including a truck service and a Willys auto dealership.

In 1924 Roy Westrick founded the Fort Wayne Spring Service at 605 Lafayette dealing in auto springs and chassis parts. The firm remained there until 1959 when it was moved to the present site at 614 East Washington. The Lafayette Street structure then was used by the Paramount Paper Company. This building, too, came under the sledge of the redevelopment program and disappeared from the scene in 1967.

ONE BLOCK HELPED LIGHT UP THE COUNTRY

Now part of the Fort Wayne Fine Arts complex, the 300 block east of historic Columbia Street did not share in the business and industrial hubbub of this one-time principal thoroughfare until the late 1880s. A muddy lane for many years and a part of the common road to the old fort, it lay between Barr and Lafayette streets.

The earliest recorded activity there was a large log tavern erected on the northeast corner of Barr and Columbia by William Sutenfield in 1823 and within its walls a part of the city's future was planned. Years later the block provided frontage for the Jenny Electric Light & Power Company, a forerunner of General Electric and a pioneer in municipal street lighting from old New Orleans to Oakland, California.

Without paving, drainage, curbs or lighting, the first improvement came to the 300 block east in 1879 when its rutted dirt surface was graded.

Sutenfield was a dynamic man who served as trustee of the community when it reached the status of a town. An extensive traveler in the area, he had joined Major John Whistler's forces in Newport,

Kentucky before they came to Fort Wayne. He carried the mail between Fort Wayne and Chicago, making one trip on foot in 1814.

Suttenfield likewise was one of the organizers of the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne. His home was convenient to the tavern--on the southwest corner of Barr and Columbia.

The Deneal boat yard flourished on the Comparet Basin at the east end of the block after the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal and one of the many associated with it was Captain John W. Whittaker who went to the Pacific Coast where he became governor of the State of Oregon. The Deneal yard suspended operations in the 1840s.

The boat yard was followed on the entire north side of the block by the canal-side terminal facilities of the Ohio and Indiana Railroad which shuttled up and down Lafayette Street from the present right-of-way of the Penn-Central. The tracks, passenger depot, freight and engine houses filled the entire north side of the street until 1857 when the terminal was re-established on the main line between Clinton and Calhoun streets.

Long after the Suttenfield Tavern left the scene, the corner was occupied by the M. P. Beegan Grocery. In the early 1890s the Globe Flour and Spice Mills began operations on the corner and on January 26, 1895 Henry C. Berghoff disposed of his interests in the Berghoff Brewery to give full time to the mill.

The Wiegman Brothers became operators of the mill on February 12, 1906 and an addition was made to the building, expanding production to 100 barrels of flour a day.

Two years later, June 10, 1907, the property was leased by the newly organized Globe Printing and Binding Company and that business continued at this location for twenty years.

Final occupant of the Suttenfield Tavern site was the Fort Wayne Waste Paper Company. A fire destroyed the corner building in 1957 and the firm moved its operation to Dwenger Avenue.

Other enterprises came to the 300 block East



The northeast corner of Barr and Columbia streets, site of the Sutenfield Tavern erected in 1823. The site was later occupied by the Globe Mills and the building at the right was the recent home of the Consumers Pipe and Supply Company. Photo by Sid Pepe.

Columbia Street and either died out or changed locations. Consumers Pipe and Supply organized by Patrick E. Rooks and a son Daniel J. occupied the building at 305 East Columbia until April, 1969 when the business was moved to 1217 Broadway. The Columbia Street building was subsequently demolished.

Jacob Weil, a native of Switzerland and his heirs were familiar figures on the street for many years. The elder Weil opened a hide and wool business in a building owned by Perry A. Randall on the north side of the block, number 85-87.

On July 31, 1887 a roaring fire raced through the building and gutted it; the flames also destroyed the George P. Barnum livery stable at 91 East Columbia but the Pennington Machine Works on the other side of

Weil Brothers somehow was saved.

Three days later the Weils temporarily resumed business on the south side of the street in a building at 78 East Columbia.

The fire aroused a tempest in Landlord Randall and he subsequently became involved in a \$10,000 slander suit filed by Abraham Weil, a son of the firm's founder. Then on March 29, 1893 the Weils purchased the fire site from Randall for \$8,000. This became the location of the Paragon Manufacturing Company, makers of shirtwaists, a firm operated by Weil's sons, Abraham and Isaac. The shirtwaists became highly popular through the Midwest.

Another fire damaged the Weil Brothers building on the south side of the street on September 28, 1895, but the firm operated in that location for more than forty years. The building was demolished in 1963.

The Paragon Company, managed by Charles MacDougal, operated without incident for eleven years when a fire on February 5, 1905 so heavily damaged the building that the firm moved to 825-27 South Barr Street.

Jenny leased another Randall building at 89 East Columbia Street on November 5, 1893 and by February of the following year the city signed a contract with the firm for street lighting. On March 18, 1884 the Jenny Company received orders for six lighting towers in Danville, Illinois and four in Goshen.

On April 2, 1884, Jenny contracted with the city for erecting light towers in the schoolyards on Harmor, Butler, South Hanna and Wells streets in the Nebraska section, Archer's Addition, at Taylor and Broadway, and the southeast at the Bass Foundry & Machine Works. On May 22 of that year they crowned the court house dome with electric lights.

Subsequent orders were received for lighting the streets of Oakland, California, New Orleans, Louisville and Peoria, Illinois.

The Star Iron Tower Company of Fort Wayne furnished the fourteen 125-foot structures for lighting the city of New Orleans.

On February 27, 1885 Charles Jenny petitioned

the circuit court to release him from a contract made by his father which bound all their inventions to the service of the Jenny firm and this led to his organization on April 3, 1895 of the Jenny Electric Light Company, Inc. with capital stock of \$50,000. This firm later negotiated for the purchase of the Gaus Works on Broadway which subsequently became General Electric. In 1883 James A. Jenny organized the original company which occupied sites at the southwest corner of Calhoun and Superior streets and on West Superior at the foot of Wells Street. R. T. McDonald was among the original sponsors of the electric company.

The Metropolitan Livery Stables, 91-97 East Columbia were leveled by the Weil fire of 1887 but the business survived. In operation for many years, Dr. Barnum added a hack service in 1889 comparable to the modern taxicabs. The firm suspended business in the early 1900s.

In 1906 International Harvester erected a four-story building in the 300 block of East Columbia as a retail outlet for farm machinery, service and other agricultural needs. Earlier, this location had been the site of stone and salvage yards. For a number of years after International Harvester closed the subsidiary was used as a warehouse by the Sigrist Furniture Company. The structure was demolished in 1968.

Late to come into its own, the 300 block of passing Columbia Street had a part in mapping the future of the city and contributed to the lighting of cities from the Mississippi Delta to the Golden Gate.

HEDEKIN HOUSE SERVED 124 YEARS

Hedekin House, which tumbled to the swing of the wrecker's ball in April, 1969 was a part of the Columbia Street growth pattern though it stood 124 years in the comparative hush of nearby Barr Street.

For twenty-five years it was but a block distant

from the Wabash and Erie Canal--conveniently aloof from the constant movement along the waterfront. It is best remembered as the Home Hotel, the dean of Fort Wayne hostelries.



The Hedekin House (later the Home Hotel) erected 1843-44. Demolished 1968. Photo by Sid Pepe--1960.

For several years before it left the downtown scene, there was hope that somehow it might fit into the development of the Fine Arts Center.

The three-story structure, whose second-floor balcony hosted many prominent leaders in earlier years, was carefully restored by the late Roscoe Hursh; his wife, Pauline, continued its management after her husband's death in 1962.

For many years it had been home to pensioners and other permanent residents and so its label through a great part of the 20th Century was fitting. In what

had once been the basement kitchen, there remained a spit large enough to accommodate a side of beef.

Michael Hedekin, the builder of the hotel in 1844, came to Fort Wayne from County Westmeath, Ireland early in 1843 and by June of that year had opened a general store on the southeast corner of Barr and Columbia streets. The business venture prospered and nine years later he began planning the hotel building that was to bear his name.



The southeast corner of Barr and Columbia streets site of the Hedekin general store from 1834 to about 1870. To the rear is the Hedekin House (later the Home Hotel).

Photographed by Sid Pepe--1960.

Perhaps the most unusual guest of its 124-year history was Samuel F. Curtis, who in 1856 registered not only himself but 25 wooden boxes, each containing 1,000 silver dollars. Curtis came to establish the Bank of Fort Wayne, and the capital was stored in Hedekin House until accommodations were made ready

for the bank on the east side of Calhoun Street, near Columbia.

Curtis later volunteered his services to the Union cause when the Civil War began, and he rose to the rank of major general, serving in Arkansas, Missouri and in the Indian Territory.

Hedekin House was opened with a military ball at which appeared the "Silver Grays," a crack Detroit military unit. The hotel was leased on June 16, 1846 by Calvin Anderson of Manchester, Vermont whose dedication to temperance kept the flow of liquor away from its walls.

The Andersons had six children; Lydia, Calvin, Sara, Mary, Eli and Theresa. Eli G. Anderson for many years operated the Anderson Tea & Coffee Company at one time located at the corner of Broadway and Jefferson streets; he was a deacon in the First Baptist Church and active in the work of the historic congregation.

Hedekin House had thirty-four guest rooms, each equipped with fire escapes of knotted rope. The iron fittings for these rope ladders were still imbedded in the walls when the old building was razed.

Probably by design, the first floor of Hedekin House was proportioned for business purposes--a wide and age-resistant staircase led to the second-floor lobby. There were two large rooms, second-floor front, and one of these the Hurshes converted into a modern, tasteful office.

The declining years of former Hedekin House were its most gracious ones. Lloyd Hursh, former businessman of the Leo-Grabill area, became the first owner of the building outside the Hedekin estate in 1921. The establishment had deteriorated into something of a flop house, but its strong fittings stood up remarkably under years of abuse.

When Roscoe Hursh, a son, became involved with the historic structure in 1953, its possibilities appealed to his varied mechanical skills. A sales representative for National Mill & Supply Company for many years, he set his imagination to work towards restoration.

One of the difficulties he overcame was refurbishing the distinctly period wrought iron railings of the recessed balconies on the second and third floors.

At the time of his unexpected death, Hursh was excited about the restoration of the fireplaces which had been closed and concealed down through the years.

He scrounged buildings on deteriorating Columbia Street as they were demolished to stock various items of vintage wood trim that might be needed for future maintenance of the building.

Previous lessors and owners of old Hedekin House are vaguely recorded as J. Johnson, J. J. Knox, J. C. Gaylord, Ely Kerns, H. J. Mills, a Mr. Wolf, Avery Freeman, a Mr. Denison, Edward Purcell and Jacob Swaidner. In 1876 the management was assumed by Avery Freeman, Jr., former proprietor of the Exchange Hotel on West Main Street.

Michael Hedekin had died in 1872; he was seventy-nine. He had been active in civic affairs and for three years before his death served on the city council. The Hedekin homestead on East Main Street later was occupied by Congressman James M. Robinson.

Hedekin had three children by his first marriage, two daughters and a son. Thomas became a vice-president of the White National Bank; his widow, the former Cornelia O'Connor who died in August, 1933, at Santa Cruz, California, was the last of the Hedekin family.

The 300 block of East Columbia Street, with which Hedekin House neighbored, was immediately east of the original plat of the city. A long-tenure business on the south side of this block was operated for more than forty years by the Weil Brothers.

Through the years the block had a scattering of blacksmith shops, taverns, barbershops, scrap yards and rooming houses. Lots (342-344) at the extreme east end of the block were owned by the Ohio and Indiana and subsequently the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago railroads from 1853 to 1914 when title was transferred to Henry Bullerman, a stone mason and from 1936 to 1959 occupied by the Fort Wayne Spring Service.

Several doors to the west was a blacksmith shop operated by Tom Clark, later acquired by John Jackson and his father early in the century. The Meyer Ruchman Company and the American Sanitary Wipers Company later chose this site, occupying three buildings, 334-340. In August, 1940 a fire destroyed these properties but the adjoining barbershop of Dale Inman was saved.

West of the Weil Brothers yard was a smithy operated by Owen Farnan for many years. Another prominent business in this area of the block was the Mulhaupt Printing Company established at 306 East Columbia in 1923 by William Mulhaupt, Maurice Minnick and Eldon Crawford. They engaged in general printing until 1948 when they moved to 340 East Berry.

These were some of the many business neighbors old Hedekin House survived--just a stone's throw off Columbia Street. Just close enough to the action, Hedekin built his hotel.

When decline came to Columbia Street, it was too close.

CORNER STEEPED IN HISTORY

What Historian Roy M. Bates identifies as the most historic site in the city of Fort Wayne is now the western end of the Fine Arts Center, formerly the southeast corner of Barr and Columbia streets.

On this ground once stood Ewing's Tavern sometimes called Ewing's Washington Hall, a log gathering place in which the destinies of both Fort Wayne and northeastern Indiana were charted by pioneer government.

So well known did it become in a few years that "Washington Hall" was designated as the meeting place for the most significant legislative acts of northern Indiana--decisions that also effected the development of a much wider area.

Some of these events were shared by the Suttentfield Tavern on the northeast corner of Barr and Columbia, a log shelter erected shortly after Washington Hall in 1823. It originally catered more to entertainment.

That was the year of the organization of the first fraternal society in Indiana north of Indianapolis. With special dispensation, meetings were held in Washington Hall which led to the chartering of Wayne Lodge No. 25, Free and Accepted Masons. The charter was granted on November 10 and the first official meeting of the lodge was held in the office of Indian Agent John Tipton within the palisade of the fort, a week later.

The last building to stand on the site of Washington Hall was a three-story brick structure finally occupied by the Pembleton Electronics, which recently moved to 513 East Wayne Street before the property was razed by order of the Redevelopment Commission.

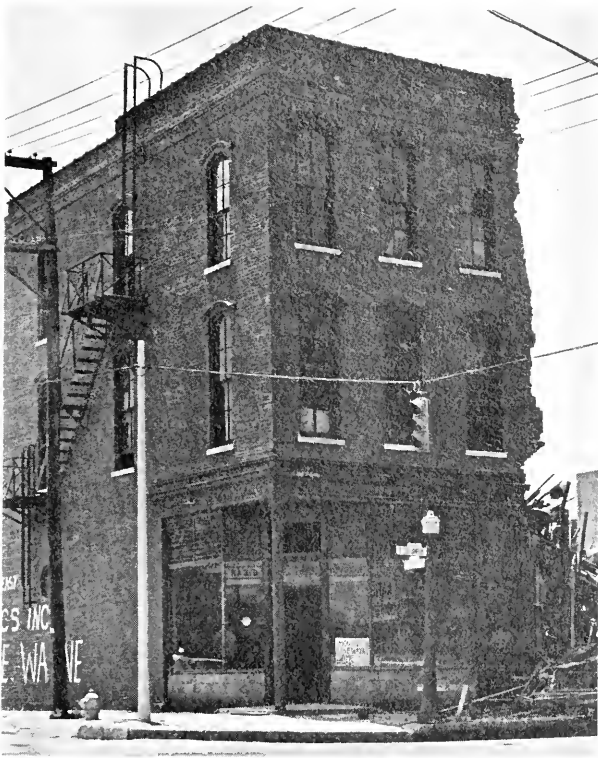
Alexander Ewing, who served with distinction under General William Henry Harrison, the first territorial governor of Indiana, lived to operate his widely respected tavern for only a few years.

A native of New York State (born 1753) Ewing and his family moved to what is now Monroe, Michigan in 1802 after some financial reverses. Five years later the Ewings moved to Piqua, Ohio where Alexander built a log structure that served both as a tavern and trading post. Later the family moved to Troy, Ohio.

As a resident of Ohio, Ewing became involved with the Miami County Militia in which he reached the rank of colonel. This unit joined General Harrison in his expedition to relieve the siege of Fort Wayne during the War of 1812. This was Ewing's first visit to Fort Wayne.

Later Ewing became a volunteer spy in Harrison's service and took part in the Battle of the Thames in Ontario where the great Shawnee war chief Tecumseh was defeated and killed.

In 1822 Colonel Ewing moved his family to Fort Wayne and the following year Washington Hall became a focal point of northern Indiana history.



Southeast corner of Barr and Columbia streets

William Suttentfield, the rival tavern proprietor, lived within the fort for some years and in 1814 erected the first residence outside the palisade. This occurred before any streets existed. After the original plat of the city was prepared, the Suttentfield house was found to rest in the center of Barr Street, near Columbia.

Subsequently it was moved to the southwest corner and made a part of Ewing's Washington Hall.

Five years after coming to Fort Wayne Colonel Ewing died of a respiratory ailment; he was a six-footer weighing 200 pounds. After his tenure, operators of Washington Hall included Robert Hood, Abner

Gerard, Samuel Sowers and a Mr. Timmons.

Immediately after the fort was abandoned as a military post in early spring, 1819 Captain James Riley surveyed a military tract of forty acres around the bastion for use of the local Indian agent.

With the exception of the forty acres, Congress drew up an act May 8, 1822 authorizing the sale of all government owned land in the area. The act was signed by President James Monroe and the land sale opened October 22, 1823 at the land office in the fort. Joseph Holman was the first receiver of the land office.

It was at this time that John T. Barr and John McCorkle pooled their resources and bought the government tract for \$1.25 an acre and immediately platted the land for business and residential use. These 110 lots, now a part of the central business district, became the Original Plat of the City of Fort Wayne. Much of the Barr and McCorkle holdings were sold at Washington Hall.

These original Fort Wayne real estate men influenced the selection of Fort Wayne as the county seat of Allen County on March 26, 1823 by offering a liberal area for the erection of a court house and jail.

The four commissioners who made this selection were directed to meet at Washington Hall; Lot Bloomfield of Wayne County, Abiathar Hathaway of Fayette County, William Connor of Hamilton County and James M. Ray of Marion County. They made the trip by horse, and quickly concluded their business by selecting Fort Wayne as the county seat of Allen County.

Allen County boundaries, as approved by the Legislature December 17, 1823 to become effective the following April 1, embraced what is now Wells, Adams, DeKalb and Steuben counties and portions of Noble, LaGrange, Huntington and Whitley counties. Governor William Hendricks appointed Allen Hamilton the first sheriff. His first official act was to supervise the first county election which took place May 22, 1824 in Washington Hall.

Four days after the election, the county commissioners began a six-day session at Washington Hall and their first action was to name Joseph Holman

as county treasurer. The new treasurer was required to post a bond of \$1,000.

Subsequent meetings of the commissioners were held for the most part at Washington Hall--sometimes it was expedient to meet in Sutenfield's Tavern across the street.

On May 31, 1824 the commissioners met at Washington Hall and strangely defined Wayne Township as embracing the whole of present Allen County, which at that time constituted all of northeastern Indiana. So it remained until January, 1826.

The first session of the Allen County Court likewise was held in Washington Hall August 9, 1824; the court continued to hold most of its sessions at the hall until the first court house was built.

There is no complete record of activity on the southwest corner after Washington Hall was destroyed by fire in 1858. John Laurent & Son operated a liquor business on the corner and about 1873 a three-story brick building was erected there, and it bore the numbers 234-236 East Columbia Street. Several brick soaking tanks found in the basement of the structure indicated that a saddlery was once operated there.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Joseph Langard operated a saloon on the first floor, and the second and third floors were used as a boardinghouse. Later Louis Langard, one-time member of the city council, operated a combined grocery and saloon on the first floor of the premises.

The final tenant, Pembleton Electronics, was organized in 1932 by Frederick W. Pembleton at 919 Parkview Avenue; the firm later moved to a building on the northeast corner of Broadway and Washington Boulevard which later became the site of Mrs. Cooper's restaurant. In 1945 Pembleton moved to 236 East Columbia Street and remained until 1969.

A son, James W. Pembleton, was associated in the business with his father for a number of years. Once a horse-watering trough stood on the Barr Street side of this building, and for the safety of pedestrians, the Pembleton's removed a number of hitching rings secured to the sidewalk.

Before Pembleton Laboratories, the structure was occupied for a time by the Peter J. Refakis Pioneer Barber Supply Company, a firm that remained on Columbia Street a total of forty-four years. In 1966 it was moved to 234 West Main Street to provide clearance for development.

Refakis came to Fort Wayne from Chicago in 1921 and became associated immediately with the Columbia Candy Kitchen. Later he went to the Levy Brothers store on Barr Street and subsequently was employed by Patterson-Fletchers. In 1925 he purchased the barber supply business that had been established at Brackenridge and Calhoun streets by Charles Obseer and subsequently operated by Martin L. Lose.

SAMUEL HANNA, FATHER OF FORT WAYNE, WOULD HAVE LOVED SPACE AGE

Samuel Hanna, sometimes aptly referred to as the "father of Fort Wayne," would have reveled in the space age.

It was his extreme impatience with pioneer transportation that influenced the building of plank roads, the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal and finally the projection of the railroads.

Hanna, a versatile man of great discipline, used this philosophy of speed progress around himself. Ironically, his first business venture as a teen-ager was a failure. His partner disclaimed his obligations under the old infancy statute but Hanna worked years to settle his debts with interest.

He died a wealthy man in 1866--his funeral procession extended from the court house to the cemetery, a distance of two miles.

Until a few years ago the old Henderson-Reed Brothers Company building on the northwest corner of Barr and Columbia streets remained a monument to his civic enterprise. This was the site of the famous Barnett-Hanna trading post, a partnership that proved

highly successful.



The Hanna Building at the northwest corner of Barr and Columbia streets as it appeared in 1952 after the east one-third of the building was removed --Photo by Peter Certia.

Hanna was born October 18, 1797 in Scott County, Kentucky and in 1804 the family settled on a new farm near Dayton, Ohio. As was the way of life, then, Hanna's elementary education was neglected while he helped his father, James, clear and develop the farm property.

At age 19, he was clerking in a store at Piqua, Ohio. He and another young man bought out the store, giving their \$3,000 personal notes as security. It was this business that ended in failure.

For some time after this, he taught in a country

school and as an instructor his dedication to discipline and system became evident. His favorite maxim was "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well."

Formal negotiations with the Indians, leading to an expansion of the white man's enterprise, attracted Hanna to St. Mary's, Ohio in 1818. There he and his brother, Thomas, became engaged in provisioning men and horses at the busy treaty center, moving the merchandise in by oxen from Troy.

This was a profitable venture and provided the nucleus of the colossal Hanna fortune that was to be accumulated.

At St. Mary's Hanna became interested in the military establishment to the west known as Fort Wayne. In 1819 Hanna found the city he was to help shape little more than an Indian trading post, with a few white stragglers from the old military post. The forests that extended for hundreds of miles in every direction were inhabited entirely by Indians.

Hanna was only twenty-two when he settled in this wilderness.

A year earlier he had made the acquaintance of James Barnett, a Pennsylvanian (born 1785). Barnett, too, came to Fort Wayne and they formed a partnership to establish the trading post, a log structure built almost entirely by Hanna.

The trading post became sort of a hub in the development of the village. At the time there were no streets, only trails, and the area had never been platted. The log trading post eventually was replaced by a story and half frame structure and as the years passed, this gave way to a substantial block of brick business houses.

Barnett and Hanna developed a flourishing business with the Indians and subsequently the settlers who followed them.

The supply lines of the post extended as far as Detroit, Boston and New York City. The supplies came all too slowly for Hanna in canoes, pirogues (those boats hollowed out from logs), flatboats on the St. Mary's River from Miami County, Ohio and horse-drawn wagons.

In 1820 Hanna became the community's first postmaster and as a result the trading post became Fort Wayne's first post office.

Hanna and Barnett became brothers-in-law in 1824; Barnett married Hanna's sister, Nancy, at Troy, Ohio, while Hanna married Eliza Taylor, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Israel Taylor of Boston. The Hannas soon established a home on the northwest corner of Barr and Berry streets, opposite the former City Hall. Late in the 1830s the Hannas built the mansion at Lewis and Gay streets that remained a landmark until its demolition in 1962. For years it was known as Hanna Homestead.

From the time he came to Fort Wayne, Hanna was deeply disturbed by the inconvenience and discomforts of transportation of the day. Grain raised in the area had to be processed in southern Michigan or Ohio and to correct this Hanna and Barnett built a grist mill on the west bank of the St. Mary's River directly south of the present Oakdale Bridge.

The surveying mind of President George Washington already had suggested the construction of a canal through the Fort Wayne area and this idea never left Hanna's mind. Discussions on the subject between Hanna and David Barnett led to Hanna's procurement of surveying instruments in the East so the engineering could be started.

Hanna subsequently became the chief promoter of the Ohio and Indiana Railroad which, when merged with other lines, became the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad--now the Penn-Central.

He became president of the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad and headed a company that constructed the Lima Plank Road, a route that now connects Fort Wayne and Howe, Indiana. He also served as road supervisor of Wayne Township, a natural position for one so intent on improving travel conditions in the Fort Wayne area.

His other interests were varied; he served as a judge, state senator, treasurer of Allen County and was an organizer of the First Presbyterian Church.

A fire destroyed the famous trading post in 1842

and on the site Hanna erected a three-story brick structure which served various business enterprises until 1955. Occupants of the site included J. W. Robb, commission merchant; O. W. Jefferds, notary; George Wood, land agent and the first mayor of the city; the Judson McComb grocery; Welsh Clothing and W. E. Harber & Company, produce and fruits.



The Hanna Building as it appeared in 1938. W. E. Harber & Company occupied the corner room while the balance of the building was occupied by Henderson-Reed Brothers Company--Photo by R. M. Bates.

The final occupant, Henderson-Reed Brothers Company, used the structure during its last seventy-five years. The firm dates back to an 1850 merger of two outlets dealing in feed and harness. After one of the longest tenures on Columbia Street, the firm moved to 3626 Northrup Street.

Judge Hanna fell ill on June 6, 1866, died on the eleventh and was buried on the thirteenth. The Masonic Order had charge of the services and all business of the city was suspended out of respect to the city's champion for so many years.

CITY'S FIRST FOOTLIGHTS DREW THEATER'S GREATS

Fort Wayne's first footlights shone upon the great and near-great of the 19th Century stage during the thirty-year span of Colerick Hall.

The three-story building stood at 215-17 East Columbia Street and was razed to clear the site for Freimann Park.

Never really abandoned during the 118 years of its existence, the structure served as the city's first opera house and the first assembly hall. The street floor housed Fort Wayne's first public bathhouse.

Colerick Hall, finally known as Grand Opera House, met a fiery end as a theater on July 5, 1881. It was rebuilt for business use and has served the various firms down through the years, largely as a warehouse.



Colerick Hall or Grand Opera House building at 215-17 East Columbia Street. Erected 1951-53.

While on the circuit of the great road shows Colerick Hall hosted Edwin Booth, Joe Murphy, Laura

Keene, Novelist Francis Bret Harte, Horace Greeley, Thomas A. Hendricks, Oliver P. Morton, Andrew Johnson (later to become president of the United States), George Holland and finally William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, the last celebrity to appear on its stage before the fire.

Edwin Booth, called the greatest tragedian of the last century, was a brother of the infamous John Wilkes Booth who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Edwin, who went into seclusion after this real-life tragedy, appeared on the stage of Colerick Hall in "Hamlet" April 19, 1873.

Greeley was the first distinguished lecturer to appear there--on February 8, 1860.

The once nationally-known playhouse bore the name of Edward F. Colerick, its builder, who held the offices of county clerk, county recorder and county surveyor during the theater's heyday. Upper-floor gathering places were a pattern of the day, and Colerick chose his site in the center of the block of Columbia Street between Clinton and Barr streets.

Before this, the court house and several other buildings provided rather austere space for public assembly and entertainment.

Colerick made known his plan to provide the city with a theater in 1851 and the day after Christmas, 1853 Colerick Hall was opened under the management of C. C. Hill and S. Bond. Since the facilities were in the nature of a gift to the city, the first attraction, appropriately, was a local minstrel performance.

Though architected as a theater, the original accommodations of Colerick Hall brought some discontent among audiences. Commented the Fort Wayne Times of July 27, 1865: "A lady must have a neck as long as a giraffe and as slender, too, if she expects to see anything on the stage from the back of the gallery. People won't pay their dimes to see nothing or break their necks or backs, too, in the effort!"

There was a public gathering of historical significance there November 15, 1854 marking the arrival of the first excursion train over the new Ohio & Indiana

Railroad. Celebrities aboard the train spattered each other with mud as they trudged from the terminal to Colerick Hall, but their spirits were heightened by a feast that awaited them there.

Colerick, himself installed the first public bathhouse on the first floor on May 27, 1859; he charged twenty-five cents for a hot or cold bath or a shower.

Coincidental with the opening of a paint and wallpaper store on the first floor of the structure March 24, 1864 by J. J. Kamm, Colerick Hall was unexplainably glorified for the fall opening; the roof was raised, galleries and boxes were installed and a parquet floor was laid. Also new was a semi-circular balcony. This finery was dedicated by the Colonel Woods Troupe from the Chicago Museum.

Another renovation came February 8, 1869 under the new management of Albert Nirdlinger. The interior was further embellished, new seats were installed and new stage scenery and other props appeared.

Two years later the playhouse began to feel the pinch of competition from the Ewing and Summit City halls and The Rink on East Berry Street. More improvements were made to the interior for the August 27, 1872 reopening with the Jennie Hight Troupe.

These followed a three-year period of physical deterioration which moved the Fort Wayne Sentinel to comment on June 2, 1875:

"The old shanty which rejoices in the high-sounding name of Colerick's Opera House has at last fallen so low that there are none so poor as to do it reverence. Good troupes are passing Fort Wayne daily and refusing to stop over. The theater is in a bad state of deterioration."

When the Bijou Theater opened across the street on the former site of Schlatter's Hardware, the opera house bowed out to competition on December 16, 1878. On October 8 of the following year James N. White, proprietor of the progressive White Fruit House, purchased the opera house at a sheriff's sale.

The future of Colerick Hall was further complicated January 11, 1880 when a winter storm swept the

roof from the building; the theater now had been re-named Grand Opera House.

Fruit Merchant White responded with improvements the next month intended to restore the theater's prestige. J. Bond and George Dickinson of Indianapolis were installed as managers.

On May 10, 1880 the owner of Grand Opera House and his two daughters left the city for an extended visit to Scotland.

The following July 5 Grand Opera House and the fur store of S. Oppenheimer were gutted by a \$20,000 fire.

Thus ended the brilliant history of Colerick Hall as a place of entertainment; it had never made money despite the talent of the people who crossed its stage.

Subsequent business tenants of the property have included W. T. Abbotts and the Boston Drygoods Company. National Mill occupied the premises for a number of years.

A few of the Colerick Hall billings have survived the years to remind of great stage attractions of the past:

February 8, 1860--Horace Greeley, lectured.

March 1, 1860--Madam Lola Montez, countess of Lansfelt, lecturer.

March 8, 1860--Professor Carver, Illinois University, lecturer.

May 22, 1860--Peak Family Swiss Bell Ringers.

May 27, 1860--Colonel Thomas A. Hendricks, candidate for governor.

February 11, 1861--Masquerade party and ball.

September 23, 1861--Volunteer Soldier's Benefit.

October 22, 1861--Holman's Comic Opera Troupe.

April 3, 1863 Frankenstein Cyclorama of the American Revolution.

May 19, 1863--Goodwin and Wilders Polyrama.

May 28, 1863--Old Folks Concert Company.

June 1, 1863--Queen City Dramatic Company.

April 19, 1864--Charles and Eliza Nestle (Fort Wayne midgets).

October 5, 1864--Andrew Johnson.

October 1, 1864--Oliver P. Morton, governor of Indiana.

November 1, 1864--Meeting of War Volunteers.

September 3, 1866--Major General Nathan Kimball.

October 4, 1866--"East Lynn," Pittsburgh Opera Company.

November 10, 1866--Chang and Eng, Siamese Twins.

February 8, 1869--"Blind Tom," Negro pianist.

June 18, 1870--Democratic Convention.

October 16, 1870--The Great Ricardo (Prima donna).

November 17, 1870--John E. Owens, comedian.

February 28, 1871--Adelaide Phillips, Concert singer.

October 3, 1872--Laura Keene.

November 12, 1872--Japanese Troupe.

November 23, 1872--Rubenstein Concert Troupe.

December 27, 1872--Felix A. Vincent, "The Organ Grinder."

February 27, 1873--Madam Carlotti Patti, vocalist.

April 19, 1873--Edwin Booth in "Hamlet."

October 22, 1873--Joe Murphy, comedian.

December 28, 1874--The Wallace Sisters.

January 29, 1875--Bret Harte, lecturer.

March 24, 1875--Temperance mass meeting.

April 20, 1875--Fritz Listerman, violinist.

May 20, 1877--Kate Clazton Troupe.

March 12, 1878--George Francis Train, lecturer.

June 23, 1880--Joseph Jefferson, comedian.

March 2, 1861, William "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

Colerick Hall passed from the cultural scene eighty-eight years ago but it will be remembered as the upstairs theater that introduced Fort Wayne to the fine arts.

COLUMBIA STREET'S EARLY PROFILE DIM

Of the 2,500 firms estimated to have shared the business life of historic Columbia Street, only 125 left any record of their existence.

This attests, perhaps, to the old affluence of the one-time main street of the city and a progressively confusing system of numbering that stymies research. Some merchants chose to abide by the big numerals of gold plate that appeared on the transoms of their stores in the earlier days, others did not.

Throughout its business life, the 100 and 200 blocks of East Columbia Street were the busiest.



Columbia Street looking west from Barr Street.

John W. Dawson, at one time editor and publisher of the Fort Wayne Times, a newspaper that brought the city's first telegraph lines from Toledo to its offices in the 200 block of East Columbia, set down a vague word picture of that particular block in 1838. This did not reach the public print until March, 1872 under the title of Dawson's Charcoal Sketches of Early Fort Wayne.

It gives a ragged profile of the north side of the 200 block east, between Clinton and Barr streets (now Freimann Park). He recalled construction of the large brick Barnett and Hanna building at the western extremity of the block, then the largest building in northern Indiana which served variously as a court house, clerk's office and sheltered several law offices as well as that of the Times. This early landmark of the street burned in 1860.

At the east end of the block was the famous Barnett and Hanna Trading Post and in between were a small residence of William H. Coombs, then a young lawyer; a building housing the firm of Wright and Dubois and several less imposing structures. Lawyer Coombs' home was in the shadow of the Barnett-Hanna building. This is all history records of the north side of the 200 block east prior to the Civil War.

At the start of the war a three-story brick building made its appearance on the northeast corner of Columbia and Clinton streets and on October 7, 1861 the firm of Thieme & Brothers, tailors, moved into the structure and remained there until the early part of the 20th Century. In the early 1870s a barber-shop was operated in the basement of the Thieme Building by Calvin A. Brooks, a negro.

On January 9, 1893 Frederick Eckart and Charles McCullough sold the Thieme Building to the Hamilton National Bank. A fire caused an estimated \$12,000 damage to the tailoring firm which then purchased the Louis Heilbronner saloon property at 18 West Berry Street. This Berry Street property later was occupied by the Meyer Tailoring, successor to Thieme & Sons, and a reorganization of the original firm.

In later years the Thieme Building itself was occupied by a fruit and produce house; it finally was razed and replaced by a parking lot.

The Barnett and Hanna structure, which so impressed Dawson, was built by James Barnett in 1824 and was the first brick building in Fort Wayne. There is a good record that the brick was made locally by Benjamin Archer; the building was unusual for the time and attracted sightseers from great distances.

During its early years the building was used for residential purposes; for nearly half a century it was occupied by Schwieters Bakery. B. F. Pettit bought the structure on January 8, 1907; part of the building had collapsed, probably as a result of the 1860 fire. It contained black-walnut beams, split oak lath and a fireplace that would accommodate ten-foot logs.

After the fire, Dawson moved the Times office to the northwest corner of Main and Calhoun streets.

Barnett, the builder, was the city's first town marshal when it was incorporated in 1829. His stipend was \$2.00 a year. He became township trustee in 1834.

Herman Schwieters opened his bakery and eating house during the Civil War and after his death two sons, Charles F. and John continued the business. When the Schwieters Bakery closed, its proprietors joined the bakery firm of Myron Downing.

The Barnett and Hanna building was replaced by a three-story brick structure that was occupied for many years by a branch office of Swift & Company, Chicago meat packers. In later years the property served as a warehouse.

A significant addition came to the 200 block east in 1904 with organization of the National Mill Supply by Sol A. Lehman. Prior to the turn of the century he had been involved in the lumber business and founded the Woodburn Lumber Company. In 1900 he relinquished his holdings to devote his business energy to the Fort Wayne Steam Specialty Company established in a one-story building at 223 East Columbia.

In 1917 this company took over the business of the Indiana Electric Appliance and the following year acquired Electric Supply & Fixture. The firm grew rapidly and soon invested in a five-story building at 207 East Columbia which National Mill occupied up to 1969. The old firm then constructed a new home north of the city near Industrial Park.

Included in the National Mill complex was former Colerick Hall standing immediately to the east.

Another old-timer of the 200 block is Indiana Feed & Seed, operated by Arthur Hille, established

at 219 East Columbia in 1921. Previously, the building was occupied by several fruit wholesalers.

The P & H Supply opened its doors at 223-25 East Columbia in 1896, and in 1957 moved to 101 East Columbia on the northeast corner of Calhoun Street. The firm moved to 1815 South Anthony Boulevard in 1956.

Meanwhile, the corporate name of the firm was changed to Wayne Pipe & Supply Company with E. J. Trier as chairman of the board, J. M. Wilson, president, A. J. Jackson, secretary-treasurer and David Scherer, assistant secretary-treasurer.

The former P & H Building on Columbia Street was occupied in later years by the Yarnelle Supply, founded by James Yarnelle and later operated by National Mill.

Alexander M. Orbison operated the largest grain warehouse in the city on the Orbison Basin of the Canal near this block, starting in 1842. When the canal was abandoned, Orbison moved to the 200 block of East Columbia Street and in 1880 relocated in Sturgis, Michigan.

It was in this block that Benjamin Tower operated the B. H. Tower furniture factory and planing mill for many years: the mill was located on the north side of the canal. In 1850, the industrialist was named chief engineer of the fire department.

Various other businesses are believed to have operated in the 200 block east, including Jared Cothrell's Mad Anthony Saloon and Eating House; Solomon Smith, agricultural implements; M. L. Mills & Company, furrier; W. Haskell, commission merchant; C. P. Fletcher billiard parlor and saloon; C. H. Schultz, saloon; Carrier & Weaver, wines and liquors; Nelson Wheeler, cabinet maker; D. O. O'Connell's Palace Hall saloon; Morris Cody grocery; John Reed, leather goods; Fort Wayne Buggy Top Company; Fort Wayne Paper Mills; Julius Beurett, stoves and tinware; H. P. Ayers, physician; American and U. S. Express Companies; John McCarty and J. H. Marshall.

The north side of the 200 block east includes lots 34-39 inclusive of the original plat of the city of Fort

Wayne; each of the lots was of sufficient size for two buildings; the numbering of the plats themselves began at Barr Street and ran westward.

Today Freimann Park beckons downtown workers and visitors to relax on its grassy turf and wonder among its shrubs and trees--a far cry from the bustle and noise of former Columbia Street.

FIRES CHANGED SKYLINE WHEN STREET WAS YOUNG

Now but the shadow of a once robust business corridor, Columbia Street had a whim of changing its complexion with spectacular bursts of flame.

That is how the Bijou Theater met its end and gave way to a hardware store. The Bijou, originally the Olympic, was an upstart on the southeast corner of Clinton and Columbia streets that starved out the box office of famous Colerick Hall across the street.

It was peculiar to Columbia Street that the most important structures occupied street corners. This was typical of the south side of the 200 block east with the Olympic Theater to the west and Washington Hall, northern Indiana's finest hostelry for many years on the east corner.

Officially, the south side of the 200 block east, included lots 58 to 63 inclusive of the original plat of the city of Fort Wayne.

The first building of importance to precede the Olympic Theater on the southeast corner of Clinton and Columbia streets was an "elegant" department store operated by Marion Sweeter. It was recalled by John W. Dawson, early Fort Wayne publisher and political figure. Next door was the two-story log home of William G. Ewing.

The record is not clear what happened, but the drygoods store was succeeded by the David M. Luncesford harness shop in 1854. A series of fires in spring, 1860 made sudden changes in the business history of

this block.

On March 19, 1860 the Lawrence Grocery and Barber Shop several doors east, directly across the street from Colerick Hall, was destroyed by fire. Two days later an attempt was made to burn the harness shop.

The following April 3 a frame building on the southwest corner of Clinton and Columbia streets went up in flames and the fire leaped Clinton Street and razed the harness shop, the old Ewing homestead and two other buildings. From the charred remains of the log building, Colonel George W. Ewing salvaged enough timber to produce a number of canes which were distributed as gifts during an Old Settlers function at Rockhill House, which stood on the present site of St. Joseph's Hospital.

It was in 1878 that a contract was let for the construction of the Olympic Opera House on the site of the Lunceford harness shop. The contract called for an expenditure of \$4,736. The grand opening of the theater came on December 16 and though some prominent road shows appeared there, the theater was temporarily closed by creditors on March 26, 1880.

The theater reopened on April 19 for a run of "Yankee Robinson," a troupe which originated with a show in the old court house in 1848, and Robinson enlivened the performance with his personal experiences in show business.

Presented by competition, the Olympic began serving its audiences beer and cigars on June 25, 1880 but the house finally closed for the summer. The theater reopened the following August 20 under new management and with a number of improvements. On November 22 the new manager, William H. Morris, disappeared leaving a string of unpaid bills and a stranded show troupe.

R. S. Smith of Indianapolis leased the theater and changed the name to the Bijou; a large audience responded to the opening on December 20.

This management was short-lived; on February 4, 1881, a fire gutted the theater causing damage estimated at \$1,500. This ended the theater experience

of the structure and in 1882 it was occupied by the Pfeiffer & Schlatter Hardware after extensive repairs and improvements had been made. In January, 1883 the firm excavated a basement under the building.

Henry Pfeiffer withdrew from the firm early in 1899 and Christian Schlatter incorporated the business as C. C. Schlatter & Company, capitalized at \$50,000.

An explosion of oil and paint in the new basement of the Schlatter firm caused between \$10,000 and \$15,000 damage to the building on October 22, 1903.



The former Schlatter Building at 601 South Clinton Street; corner of Columbia site of the "Olympic," later the Bijou Theater. Photo June 1962 by Sidney Pepe.

This had been a two-story building until 1927 when the widening of Clinton Street was begun. To compensate for space lost in the street widening and provide for future growth the Schlatter building was raised to five floors with display windows on the Clinton Street frontage. By this time it had become a complete hardware department store with sixty-five employees and the firm name was changed to the

Schlatter Hardware Company. As urban redevelopment approached in 1967, the firm established two new retail outlets in the northern part of the city. A heavy fire in the abandoned Clinton Street building hastened its razing.

Merchant Sweeter, whose drygoods establishment gave prestige to the 200 block East Columbia, was active in behalf of the city's growth. He came to the city in 1832 and immediately engaged in business. In the civic area, he served as a trustee of the town, was a member of the committee that promoted the construction of the Ohio and Indiana Railroad, became a member of the first board of aldermen when Fort Wayne was incorporated as a city in 1840 and three years later served on the reception committee for the dedication of the Wabash and Erie Canal. He died in 1875.

Another prominent resident, Frank D. Paulus, partner in the Paulus-Kaough farm implement business at 58 East Columbia, was a personal friend of President James A. Garfield.

From publisher Dawson's time until after the Civil War some of the known businesses of the south half of this block were the Phillip McDonald grocery and trading post, Patrick Corman grocery, gunsmith W. S. Smith, Frank LaSalle, Adam Hiltz bakery, Hypolite Mainer grocery and saloon, Francis Bercot boardinghouse, tailor Rudolph Boerger, John Mohr bootery, Miller and Blosser Bakery, Hiram Wells grocery, tailor John Grieb, shoemaker G. Reffel, John Didier, grocery and liquor store, Henry Stelhorn bakery, Brandriff and Roberts home furnishings, S. Bryant fish and candy store, A. J. McCormick, furniture store, Robert Noll butcher shop, Fred Betsch basket shop, Louis Schenk Willow Ware store, M. Reed & Company produce house and the Ira D. Williams photo gallery.

Some of these early names may still be found in the city's present directory of residency.

BUSINESS BOOMED ALONG DOCK STREET

More change came to the now-extinct 100 block of East Columbia Street--once the city's business heartland--than any other portion of that thoroughfare. The business and industrial growth of Fort Wayne started on Columbia Street and this one-block area of great change involved only lots 40 to 45 of the city's Original Plat.

Within less than a half-block of the area, on which the City-County Building now stands, were born the Meyer Brothers drug empire, the Wayne Hardware Company and S. Freiburger & Brother, once a prominent merchandiser of leather goods.



100 block of East Columbia Street on the north side.

An early business anchorage was the Allen Hamilton trading post which occupied the northwest corner of Clinton and Columbia. In 1855 this became the site of a four-story building occupied by N. B. Freeman & Company drygoods merchants.

These businesses on the north side of the 100 block east actually faced north at one time, overlooking what was a docking area of the Wabash and Erie Canal. After the passing of the canal, tracks for the Nickel Plate Road were laid over the dock and this stretch was referred to as Dock Street for many years.

And, after the canal was abandoned, these businesses about-faced to front on Columbia Street. But architecturally they remained two-faced until they came down to make way for the government building.

Organized in 1853 and at one time one of the largest wholesale drug outlets in the county, Meyer Brothers held its identity for a period of 116 years and only recently sold its interests to Hook Drugs.

John Fredrick William Meyer, born at Halden, Westphalia, Germany in 1824, came to America at twenty-three with a brother, Fredrick. They made the crossing on an English sailing ship which docked at New Orleans. The brothers proceeded by packet to Cincinnati and by canalboat to New Bremen, Ohio where, for some reason, they lacked transportation westward. They walked from New Bremen to Monmouth, near Decatur, arriving exhausted and nearly frozen on December 3, 1847.

During a four-month stay in that community, they purchased and cleared a tract of land. They established permanent residence in Fort Wayne in 1849 and obtained employment in the pioneer drug firm of Hugh B. Reed. In 1852 John became a partner in the firm of Wall & Meyer on the north side of Columbia Street a short distance west of Clinton Street.

The following year the brothers organized the drug firm of Meyer Brothers & Company. So capable were the brothers at merchandising that in 1856 they organized an outlet in St. Louis which became one of the largest wholesale drug firms in the United States.

A fire in 1862 destroyed the Fort Wayne investment of the Meyer brothers but they reopened the store and operated at the original site until 1872 when the retail and wholesale divisions were moved to the southwest corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets in the new Keystone block where operations continued

until 1919.

A second branch was established by Meyer Brothers in 1875 at Kansas City, Missouri and a third opened in Dallas in 1887.

The business was purchased by a local group of businessmen in 1903 but retained its name. Directors of the new firm were J.F.N. Meyer, William J. Vesey, Charles F. Freese, F. B. Kunkle, Arthur Beuke, G. H. Heine and Robert Klaehn. After the death of Meyer in 1910, Gottlieb H. Heine became president of the firm and it flourished for many years. For a number of years the firm's executive offices were maintained on West Columbia Street immediately west of Fisher Brothers Paper Company.

In early 1969 the Meyer Brothers chain was acquired by the Hook Drug Company of Indianapolis; the transaction involved ten stores in Fort Wayne and outlets in Anderson, Kokomo, Muncie, Noblesville, Richmond, South Bend, Goshen, LaPorte, and Mishawaka. In its recent history the Meyer's firm had corporate offices at 5025 New Haven Avenue under the name Meyer's Rexall Drugs.

The birth of Wayne Hardware, another prominent member of the Columbia Street family, dates back to 1862 when Alvin S. and Edwin W. Prescott entered the hard goods business on West Columbia. In the early 1880s, the firm moved to the northwest corner of Clinton and Columbia where on June 18, 1883 it closed its doors temporarily because of financial difficulties. The business was purchased the following September for \$24,000 by Gideon W. Seavey. Seavey a native of Palmyra, Illinois, came to the city in 1877 and engaged in the practice of law three years later.

In 1880, Seavey became involved in the lumber business and upon purchase of the defunct Prescott firm the store reopened as the G. W. Seavey Company. His son, Walter, entered the firm and in 1897 Seavey' moved to 121 West Main Street and on January 30, 1914 was incorporated as the Seavey Hardware Company.

Increasing business led the firm to move to the

northwest corner of Pearl and Harrison streets; the first floor of this building had been occupied by the interurban waiting room and ticket office. In 1919 a business group headed by Frank H. Cutshall acquired the Seavey interests and on April 5, 1920 was incorporated as the Wayne Hardware Company. Dean F. Cutshall, a son of Frank H. Cutshall, now heads the firm.

The Freiburger firm was established in 1870 by Leopold Freiburger who had come to Fort Wayne from Mt. Carroll, Illinois. Joseph and Herman Freiburger, sons of the founder, served as president and secretary-treasurer, respectively; they were dealers in leather goods and adult and children's shoes.

Soon after the Seavey building was vacated on the northwest corner of Columbia and Clinton, the Freiburgers opened a subsidiary there, the Fort Wayne Glove & Mitten Company.

One of the many fires that persisted in changing the business complexion of Columbia Street destroyed the Morgan & Beach Hardware Company, 119-21 East Columbia Street, the Nathan Kircheimer wholesale paper store and the Romary-Goeglein Hardware Store at a loss of \$150,000 on February 28, 1897. Shortly after the fire the Morgan & Beach site was acquired by the Freiburgers who built a six-story building there and subsequently moved to this center position on the north side of the 100 block east.

In 1837 the post office was maintained in a low, frame building on the north side of the 100 block east by Henry Rudisill. A four-story brick building made its appearance on the site of the old Hamilton trading post in 1855 and was occupied by N. B. Freeman & Company, drygoods merchants. The general offices of the Wabash & Erie Canal, including the superintendent and toll collector, were located on the second floor of this building on the northwest corner of Columbia and Clinton.

In 1837, Dr. Merchant W. Huxford operated a respected drug firm in the half-block north, westward from Clinton Street. The Huxford residence, a gray stucco building, still stands at the rear of a service

station on the southeast corner of Spy Run and Tennessee avenues, now occupied by Old Fort Books.

More than a dozen older firms are known to have done business in this bustling half block during the earlier years, dispensing groceries, leather goods, spices, hard goods, meat, books, stationery and footwear.

ENTERPRISE WAS LEGACY OF A STREET THAT DIED

Imaginative merchandising was a way of life along old Columbia Street, the street that began as a path to the fort and served as the city's main thoroughfare for many years.

This was particularly true of the north side of the 100 block East Columbia where one establishment had a resident buyer in the East and another scattered its salesmen all over the Midwest.

The Rothchild Brothers, Solomon and Benjamin, were widely known through the Midwest in the men's clothing field. Their retail outlet, known as the Red Front Clothing Store, first occupied the imposing Keystone Block on the southwest corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets and moved to 107 East Columbia in 1876. The business expanded into an adjoining building and a wholesale outlet was developed that dispatched sales people all over the Midwest.

On the northeast corner of Calhoun and Columbia streets Jonas Wade Townley of Elizabeth, New Jersey established a general store in 1839. He sold the business in 1862 to a brother, Robert Townley, George DeWald and Henry Bond, then the firm became known as Townley, DeWald, Bond and Company. Robert, senior partner who also served as town trustee and councilman, resided in Elizabeth, New Jersey and served as the firm's eastern buyer, making annual visits to Fort Wayne. He was elected mayor of Elizabeth in 1876, and his death occurred four years later.

The firm subsequently became known as George DeWald & Company.

Inevitable circumstances and one of those spectacular fires changed the leadership of the firm in rapid sequence; Townley died in 1897 and George DeWald passed away two years later.

Late the same year the DeWald building and the adjoining M. F. Kaag china store were destroyed by a \$225,000 blaze. The next day, President Robert T. DeWald of the firm announced the block would be rebuilt and temporary business quarters were established in the Baltes Block on the southeast corner of Berry and Harrison streets.



The George DeWald Company building at the northeast corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets. Erected in 1900 following the DeWald Company fire of 1899. Photographed 1961 by Sidney Pepe.

The new DeWald business building on Columbia Street was completed in 1900 and the firm continued

until 1936 with Robert W. T. DeWald as president; George L. DeWald as vice-president and William Beck as secretary-treasurer. This firm, with a record of ninety-seven years in the city, was succeeded by the Fort Wayne Drygoods Company.

In 1937 the P & H Supply Company which had operated at 223-25 East Columbia moved into the DeWald building and continued there until 1956 when the firm moved to 1815 South Anthony Boulevard. This then became one of the buildings to absorb the burgeoning services of Allen County government which in recent years, overflowed the court house and took offices in quarters scattered through the business district.

Another great firm on Columbia Street, the Morgan & Beach Hardware, was wiped out by a \$125,000 fire February 28, 1897. The business had been established in 1846 by Henry Durarie, a native of Germany, who sold out to Oliver P. Morgan ten years later. Fredrick Beach, a native of Germany, was admitted to the firm in 1862 and in 1864 a fourth floor was added to the hardware firm's building at 19-21 East Columbia. Beach died in April, 1895 and Morgan purchased his partner's interests from heirs of the estate. Morgan, a native of Lawrenceburg, Indiana, served as a member of the city council, recorder and public school trustee. His father, Joseph Morgan, served as mayor. The younger Morgan also had served as a collector on the Wabash and Erie Canal.

The firm was known as Morgan & Company when the fire wrote an end to the business. Freiburger Brothers, prominent leather merchants, erected a six-story building on this site.

Just west of Morgan & Company stood the Post House, one of the earliest structures on the north side of the 100 block east which served the public until after the Civil War. It took its name from the proprietor, James Post, and for some years was one of the two establishments in the town where a full course meal could be had.

After the Civil War several businesses occupied Post House without leaving any record. The City's

first Ford auto agency was established in this building by Jesse Brosius, who lived on the southwest corner of Cass and Fourth streets.

Late in the 19th Century Alexander H. Staub operated a tin shop on the site; Staub sold out to two employees, John Rissing and Charles B. Rundell who changed the name of the firm to Rissing and Rundell. Rundell later became sole owner of the business until his death in April, 1938; shortly afterward the firm was liquidated.

Joseph Bell crossed the threshold of two business failures at 11 East Columbia Street to open the most plush buggy agency in the area. The firm of Harper, Edsall and Monahan which operated there earlier, filed bankruptcy in 1876 and during December, the Douglas S. Low millinery house was moved there. This business ended with the assignment of Low's property to Fredrick T. Zollars, attorney for the creditors.

Bell featured a large display room in the building in which various types of buggies were displayed under hitch to life-size figures of horses. Bell also stocked the latest trends in harness; this business continued until the early part of the present century.

Probably the first of several grocers to make an appearance on the south side of the street was William Henderson whose store was just east of Calhoun Street. Later Henry T. Sharp had a hat and fur business there which was destroyed by fire early in March, 1863. Sharp moved to the old post office building on Clinton Street near the mayor's office; he subsequently was the successful Citizens Ticket candidate for mayor, winning a majority of 693 votes over his opponent, B. H. Tower.

The H. R. Schwegman Drygoods firm opened at the scene of the Sharp fire in 1864 and operated for a few years until the C. Orff drygoods and millinery business occupied both 105 and 107 East Columbia.

On Christmas Day, 1874 the Orff store was the scene of an \$8,000 robbery and the next February the firm went into receivership with liabilities of \$10,000. On April 29, 1875 R. T. McDonald was chosen assignee

for the store at a meeting of creditors, and an effort was made to liquidate the encumbrance. The store operated until 1880 when another of those Columbia Street fires destroyed the contents of the store and gutted offices of a newspaper, The Dispatch, on the second floor at a loss of \$3,000. The following April 20 the Orff Company moved to the southwest corner of Calhoun and Columbia streets. Orff had been elected to the city council in 1857 and was appointed to the board of school trustees in 1863.

M. F. Kaag & Sons, a once widely-known china-ware business organized on what is now the West Columbia Street "Landing" was moved to 105 East Columbia after Jacob Kaag, a member of the firm, died September 17, 1884. With the move, the firm was reorganized by Mathias F. Kaag, C. F. W. Kaag and Fred Kaag, and as importers and jobbers they developed a leadership of the chinaware field here, handling china, glass, queensware, silverware, cutlery and crockery. The great fire of December 27, 1899 destroyed this business along with the DeWald store. The next day, Mathias Kaag, purchased the entire stock of Ward's Crockery, 108 West Columbia, and after rebuilding at the scene of the fire, the business continued for another quarter century.

CITY-COUNTY BUILDING LINKS PAST TO PRESENT

The City-County Building has swallowed up the 100 block of East Columbia Street, a once-teeming business frontage that yielded fortunes, often throbbled with excitement and sometimes was shadowed by tragedy.

It was the only block of the city's original main street that gave deference to one bearing the shingle of "T. Hoagland, draper and tailor." Just southward on Clinton Street was the shop and residence of Jean Baptiste Bequette, silversmith and jeweler who could

be identified as the city's first manufacturer. A bit further south lived Captain Dana Columbia of canal-boat fame, after whom the street was named.



South side of 100 block of East Columbia Street

A constant Columbia Street visitor was White Racoon. This tribesman was at the Indian trading house on East Main when he was stabbed by a huge savage known as "Bob" in a fur room at the rear of the structure.

This was the summer of 1838 and John Dawson had occasion to visit White Racoon frequently as he lay dying. The devotion of the Indian's Squaw impressed the early newspaperman and moved the editor

to an eloquence that has been preserved by history in Charcoal Sketches.

He witnessed:

a devotion on the part of his (Racoon's) squaw wife which Washington Irving could not sketch truer than he did the wife in his Sketch Book. It was an affecting sight and like a 'thing of beauty which is a joy forever.' It impressed my young mind so deeply as to be undimmed by the lapse of long and busy years. In fact, since that time, while mingling with the world and taking notes of its lights and trying to forget its shadows, I have seen wives who while deeply conscious of their spiritual relation to every child of God, and polished from the fountains of literature and science, were yet seemingly wanting in the love of that untutored heart which needed a faith and hope that could not be bounded by earthly limits and restraints."

Because of what might have been the custom of the time, no punitive action was taken in the case by the white community, but the giant Bob lived in constant fear of reprisals from White Racoon's friends.

One day Bob was decoyed to a spring on the Miami reservation and while he lay on the ground to drink, two avenging compatriots of White Racoon crushed his head with a rock.

Much later prestige came to what is now the north frontage of the City-County Building with such firms as the Rurode Drygood Company, H. J. Ash Company, the Pickard Home Furnishings, Maier & Son Grocery and Hoff Brau Haus, a place which became noted through the Midwest for its German cuisine.

The Rurode firm, originally known as the New York Store, may have served as a filament for other enterprising businesses which followed. E. C. Rurode came to Fort Wayne in 1860 from Terre Haute as a young man and with John MacDougal and L. B. Root established a drygoods firm at 90 East Columbia beside the Maiers Grocery Store.

The established firm name was MacDougal, Root

& Company and it flourished from the beginning. The firm was represented by a buyer in New York City who took advantage of auctions and forced sales in the metropolis. The store was burglarized on April 13, 1863 and \$5,000 worth of silks stolen.

The store moved to the present site of the new Fort Wayne National Bank Building across from the court house on Calhoun Street in 1870. MacDougal had withdrawn from the business just before the move and the firm became known as Root & Company. MacDougal, who had married Julia Hedekin, the daughter of Michael Hedekin, builder of Hedekin House on Barr Street, died October 24, 1895.

Root passed away two years later and Ernest C. Rurode and Charles Kremmel completed the purchase. The firm then became known as the Rurode Drygoods or the New York Store. After operating for many years, assets of the Rurode Company were acquired by the former Earl Groth & Company, which remained a prominent downtown firm for many years.

The name of Henry J. Ash was to become associated with the winter comfort of Fort Wayne citizens for many years. A native of New Hampshire, he came to Fort Wayne February 12, 1860 at the age of twenty-one and opened a tin shop at 61 East Columbia Street. There he put into use a metal forming machine invented by a brother-in-law, I. Fay, of Cincinnati. The same year he formed a partnership with E. Agnew of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and the resulting firm was known to the trade as the Union Store and Tin Shop.

They moved in October, 1861 into a building at 87 East Columbia formerly occupied by H. E. Schwegman and five years later Agnew sold his interests to Frederick McCulloch and the name of the firm was changed to Ash & McCulloch.

This partnership lasted three years when Ash sold out to McCulloch and briefly retired from the field of business. He re-entered the stove and tinware business in 1871, both retail and wholesale. The firm was area agent for the famous "Garland" line of stoves, ranges and baseburners and shortly after the turn of the century, Ash became the first outlet in Fort Wayne

for the Holland Furnace Company.

The son of the founder, Fred Ash, managed the business until March, 1912 when assets of the firm were sold to the Pickard House Furnishings. The elder Ash, whose home was on the site of the present Davis Auto Company, Main and Barr streets, was eighty-three when he died in November, 1922. He had been in business on Columbia Street for half a century.

An estimated 2,500 different business firms came to and left Columbia Street before it bowed to urban development. The records of many are lost. An example is the Atlantic Gardens, a popular gathering place late in the 19th Century which was located about mid-block in a building last occupied by the Korte Paper. No record can be found of when the Gardens was established or by whom, but there is a record of the business being purchased December 24, 1888, by Hyppolite Gerardin, who was the maternal grandfather of Arthur Wunderlin. Gerardin died in 1911 - his is the only name that can be linked to the Atlantic Gardens.

CITY-COUNTY BUILDING SITE OF FIRST ICE CREAM PLANT

Somehow, the City-County Building should preserve the remembrance of grocer John G. Maier who gave the city its initial taste of manufactured ice cream. This palatable experience came some time between 1861 and 1867.

The Maier store, a brief business facade for a man of innovations, was located along what is now the north wall of the new government building; it preceded the Korte Paper building about midway of the south side of the 100 block of East Columbia Street.

Maier, a native of Germany, came to Fort Wayne from Ohio in 1846; he served as postmaster from 1852 to 1860. He raised and distributed the first strawberries in Allen County and introduced to the local

market the first musical instruments and toys.

And more--the Maier family was the first to press grape wine for commercial purposes and it was used for some years in the sacrament of communion at Trinity English Lutheran Church.

The details of these contributions to community life have been lost in history. However, it is known that the Maier Grocery opened its doors May 1, 1861 and operated as John G. Maier & Son until January 31, 1867 when the business was sold to A. R. Henderson and H. N. Putman.

The Maier family resided at 78 South Lafayette Street. This early Columbia Street merchant died July 4, 1880, aged seventy years, and funeral services were conducted at the family homestead by Rev. Samuel Wagenhals.

In later years there came to the same row of Columbia Street buildings a firm organized as an outlet for stoves manufactured in Lawton Park; in the early 20th Century it became the Pickard House Furnishing Company.

T. R. Pickard came to the city from Mt. Vernon, Ohio to become superintendent of the Bass Foundry & Machine Company. Later he started the T. R. Pickard & Sons stove foundry just south of the present City Light & Power plant. The store on Columbia Street was opened as an outlet for the foundry, and a son, Peter E. Pickard, who was a year old when the family moved to Fort Wayne, became manager of the store after completing high school.

The stove foundry closed June 9, 1883 and on October 19, 1885 the building burned to the ground; it was never rebuilt.

Peter Pickard continued operation of the Columbia Street store and was joined by a brother Harry R. Pickard; the firm operated as Pickard Brothers. In 1893 Peter supplied the design for a new building raised by R. L. Romy on the south side of Columbia Street near Calhoun Street to replace two old business houses. The Pickards moved into the new accommodations in August, 1893 and expanded in the areas of furniture, rugs and chinaware. M. Woodruff of Van Wert, Ohio

purchased the Romy Building on April 8, 1895 for \$22,000.

An incorporation of the firm under the name Pickard House Furnishing Company came in 1908 with Peter Pickard as president; A. W. Pickard, secretary and Thomas E. Pickard, treasurer.

In 1912 the firm purchased the adjoining stove business of H. J. Ash giving it a frontage of sixty feet on the street, 112-114-116 East Columbia. The store was destroyed by a fire in 1926 and the business continued in leased quarters at 1124 South Calhoun Street.

Peter Pickard, who resided at 702 West Wayne retired after fifty-four years of business life and died August 24, 1935 at the age of eighty at his summer home on Torch Lake, Michigan.

The southeast corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets began and ended as the scene of convivialty, and its heyday came during the era of Hoff Brau Haus, a tavern of Barvarian decor that became known all over the Midwest for its German food.

To begin with, a Captain Ben Smith, possibly of Wabash & Erie Canal background, operated a grocery and saloon on the corner--the two businesses often went together on Columbia Street. After Captain Smith's time there were numerous occupants, among them the Benham Photo Gallery, John Hamilton's boots and shoes, N. P. Stockberger book and stationery store, and shortly after the Civil War, the Meyer and Graffe Jewelry Store went into business there and remained until September, 1904.

At this time Mrs. William Fleming sold the property to Alex Jaxtheimer, a tailor, for \$25,000. Later the building was acquired by Harry Wiebke and became known as the Wiebke Block. For several years Wiebke operated the Palace Saloon there, assisted by Clem Ruple and John Joho.

The property was architecturally converted to become the Hoff Brau Haus between 1906 and 1907, and a German cuisine was developed that became widely popular. In later years it served only as a tavern and was known simply as "The Hoffbrau."

The business was liquidated in 1947 after

Wiebke's death, and the building was purchased by Goodwill Industries, Inc. in 1947. Goodwill was operating a few doors east on the old Pickard site and cleared the corner in 1950 to provide auto parking for Goodwill employees.

MAGNETISM OF A SQUARE WILL LINGER IN MEMORY

The new City-County Building effaces a 19th Century image of downtown that appealed to generations from the horse and buggy era into the nuclear-space age.

Around the block measured by Calhoun, Columbia, Clinton and Main streets were businesses that became institutions: Riegel's, the Fortriede shoe store, for a time Hoff Brau Haus, Meeker's barber shop, the Dutch Lunch and a fragrant corner that housed the Moritz fruit store.

"Nothing like this will ever exist in the city again," commented Roy M. Bates, city and county historian, who made the rounds of that block with countless others until the memorable and frescoed skyline fell under redevelopment.

Saturday afternoon could start with lunch at Riegel's and continue with a business or social call at Fortriede's, a refreshing interlude in Choral W. Meeker's barber chair, a round-table at the Dutch Lunch and finally a package snack for home from Moritz's.

And during an afternoon round of that block, anyone was liable to meet most everyone else.

For more years than succeeding generations will believe, Saturday afternoon was a ritual there. The pulse of the city, even the county, was taken around the square, and sometimes the issues of the day were distilled in these business institutions where sociability was a way of merchandising. Every shop

had something to offer off the shelves--or in friendship.

The barbershop, in which Meeker groomed friends and patrons for sixty-four years, was the first to close its doors on the square in December, 1966. His patrons were loyal to the finish--Albert Fortriede, one of the proprietors of a business around the corner and Historian Bates were the last customers. The shop at 132 East Columbia had been in business for many years when Meeker took a chair there.

Dutch Heinie's or the Dutch Lunch would have rounded out that year at 616-18 South Clinton Street but for circumstances that forced an earlier vacation of the premises. Arnold Heemsoth, who succeeded his father, Henry, as proprietor of the popular tavern and several of his employees were stricken by illness and the bar taps were closed for the last time on the eve of Christmas, 1966.

Historic Riegel's on the northeast corner of Main and Calhoun streets, which had prepared a new location across the street, closed its doors just before a razing ceremony on August 10, 1967 and Fortriede's, in business since 1863, closed its doors five days later. The last to leave the shoe store were again Historian Bates, barber Meeker along with Paul Wolf and Henry Wyss, the owner of a pair of boots hand-crafted for his grandfather by Louis Fortriede, founder of the business.

Fortriede's, which continued to offer custom footwear after the development of the shoe industry, was a place filled with heirlooms of the trade, and like other institutions of the square, its salesroom offered comfort for those who just came to sit awhile.

The repair shop contained some tools that had been used to make footwear for Napoleon's army. A grandfather of Andrew Lindner, one of the thirteen shoe builders once employed by the firm, had been a shoemaker in Napoleon's army. Lindner straddled a shoemaker's bench in the store for more than forty years and many of his tools were left to the shop. Later the items were given to the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Museum.

For many years the four brothers who succeeded their father, Louis the elder, in the business, were known as "The Harmony Four" -- Waldemar, the shoe builder, Edwin, Louis, Jr. and Albert. Prior to the closing the store had been operated by Louis, Jr. and Albert.

In the old days, dressings compounded for fine leather could be used also as ointments for skin infections! Until its closing the store maintained an index of fittings for customers living from northern Michigan to the Gulf of Mexico.

When it passed out of existence, Fortriede's was the fourth oldest business establishment of the city. The original store was founded in the 100 block West Main Street, but had been located on Calhoun Street since 1887.

The second floor of the building for many years sheltered the Trouteman & Ortman cigar factory, and the flooring was so impregnated with the essence of tobacco that the Fortriede brothers, who later used the space for warehousing, had only to sprinkle the timbers with water to produce vapors that drove pests away.

The third floor of the old business building once was the domain of Encampment No. 16 of the Odd Fellows Lodge, a fraternal organization that dated back to the 1850s.

Insulating of the floors with tanbark was a unique feature of the business structure. Its appearance in the debris, if noticed, likely puzzled the wreckers.

Riegel's was a Grand Central Station in miniature when the streetcars and later the trolley coaches went their separate ways from the Transfer Corner. For years there was a spacious basement kitchen that served the lunch counters upstairs. Riegel's has been Riegel's since 1905, but for many years a cigar store was operated on the original site by Joseph Getz. Al Riegel founded the business which had become widely known for its tobaccos. The business descended to two nephews, Frank Bougher and the late George Kuntz, and they remained partners until the latter's death. Riegel's is now located at 624 South Calhoun Street.

The business has been described as the hub of the home-to-work and the work-to-home cycle of the downtown workers. The store opened at 5:30 a.m. and did not close until after the last streetcar had left the Transfer Corner at night.

Meeker's place of business had been a barber-shop continuously since 1889 and until the last it remained a place where men stopped for social exchanges as well as a freshening in Meeker's chair. Former residents who returned to the city were often surprised to find Mr. Meeker still crafting at the same old stand. As the time neared for the shop's closing, Meeker discouraged talk of it among his patrons; "Lets talk about something else," he'd suggest.

The Dutch Lunch, known for its German food as was Hoff Brau Haus on the southeast corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets, became a popular haunt for succeeding generations. On Saturday afternoons, tables would be pushed together for regular gatherings of fifteen or more people, and for a time there was talk of incorporating one of the groups that got together there regularly on the weekend.

There were songfests on Saturday night, and for years a German band, crowded against the sidewalk windows, livened the tempo of things.

One Saturday afternoon group always closed its session with a ceremonial drink, for some reason called a "schwope." Normally this consisted of a mixture of gin and kimmel, but if the afternoon had been a particularly jovial one, the schwope was sometimes drawn from the water tap.

For seventy-three years the Moritz Brothers firm vended solid fruit, crisp vegetables, peanuts and bulk candies for all but a few years on Main Street a few doors west of Clinton Street. When buildings began tumbling to make way for the City-County Building, the business was moved to 621 South Harrison Street.

It was an irony that the building of court houses influenced the beginning and ending of the Moritz business. In 1896 August Moritz opened the store on the south side of Main Street, near Clinton, and when the

street was closed for the beginning of work on the present court house in 1897, Moritz moved the store across the street. When Gus Moritz died in 1905 Ongle and John Moritz took over the store. John had begun working for Gus Moritz when twelve, and remained in the business until seventy.

"The old place at Main and Clinton meant a lot to us," Mrs. Moritz commented as business was finally suspended. "We saw a lot of changes take place from the windows."

Now only one business remains to remind of the fellowship that attracted people to the square for more than a half a century. "Drop me off at Riegel's," Historian Bates asked a friend the other day: "I want to browse around and see what's going on."

BUSY STREET HAD TIME FOR WELFARE PURSUITS

Two institutions that have contributed to the strong social philosophies of the century were born in the 100 block of East Columbia Street, along the north wall of the present City-County Building.

The Fort Wayne Rescue Home and Mission, organized in 1903, first occupied a building at 118 East Columbia and in 1937 Goodwill Industries, Inc. set up its sheltered workshop at 112-14 where a grand opening was held on January 15 the following year.

Thus, the contributions of this one-time main street of Fort Wayne were not confined to the commercial and industrial development of the community.

The mission, whose dedication has been to the loneliest of men, now occupies a modern structure at 301 West Superior. The mission was experienced at over-coming odds since at one time in the late 1950s the institution was forced to curtail its services as the building it occupied was condemned for safety

reasons, floor by floor.

Goodwill, a sheltered workshop for the handicapped that has won national recognition in the field, outgrew its facilities on Columbia Street and now has a modern store and plant at 3127 Brooklyn Avenue.

A Grand Rapids and Indiana locomotive engineer named Cooper resigned from the railroad to become the first director of the Rescue Mission. Several years later Rev. Kenneth Hawkins became superintendent and held that position for more than thirty years. The first floor of the original Columbia Street building was used for religious services and dining. The second floor was converted into a dormitory.

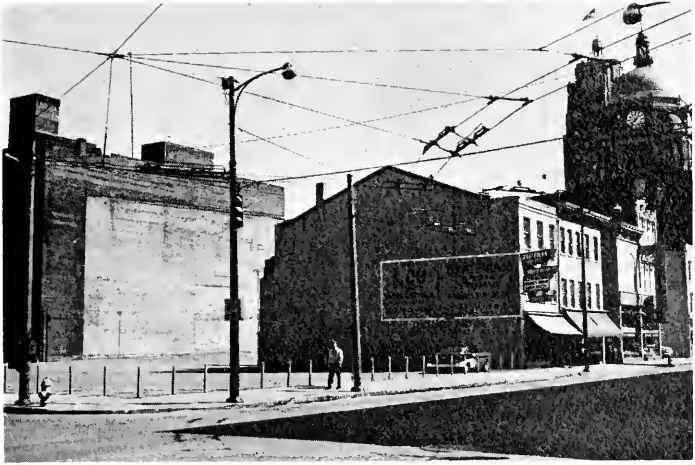
In 1945 the mission moved to a four-story building on the northwest corner of Columbia and Lafayette streets; in earlier years the structure had served as a hotel for many years under a number of proprietors and at one time was painted red as a symbol of the trade to which it catered.

During occupancy by the mission, the building slowly began to surrender to age and its upper floors were closed off. In 1959, the Mission was forced to suspend dormitory services and issued tokens for its patrons' food and lodging elsewhere.

The expense of this operation crystalized community support of a new facility for the mission, and in 1968 new quarters were made ready for the institution on West Superior Street, through the efforts of Rev. Charles Dickinson, present superintendent.

Goodwill Industries first made use of what had been the well-established Pickard House Furnishing Company which moved to Calhoun Street during the decline of Columbia. A hardware store and the DeWald Drygoods occupied the structure immediately before Goodwill.

In May 1939, Goodwill purchased the Columbia Street building from the First & Tri-State Corporation and in 1945 purchased the Wiebke Block on the southeast corner of Columbia and Calhoun, the site of the once-famous Hoff Brau Haus. Three years later the building was removed to provide a parking area for Goodwill workers.



The site of the Hoff Brau Haus at the southeast corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets. This half-block area was cleared in 1959 to make way for a parking lot and future site of the proposed City-County Building. Photo April 1960 by Sidney Pepe.

Reverend H. A. Davis managed the first operation of Goodwill, and Homer Gettle served as president of the board. Further expansion and modern facilities came during the administration of Louis R. Veale as executive director.

The fortune of a prominent Fort Wayne family was seeded along that north wall of the City-County Building. B. R. Noll for many years operated a drug store at 110 East Columbia. He was the father of the late Bishop John F. Noll of the Fort Wayne diocese of the Catholic Church and founder of Our Sunday Visitor Publishing House; William Noll, founder of the nationally-known Pinex Company on West Columbia; George Noll, who for many years represented Pinex in Canada

and Albert Noll who succeeded his father in the drug business.

Earlier businesses along the north side of Government Square included the shoe firm of C. Schiefer & Son, opened in the 1870s at 108 East Columbia. Members of this firm were Christian and William D. Schiefer and Herman H. Hartwig. By mutual consent, the firm was dissolved in March, 1888 and shortly afterwards the business was reopened by William Schiefer at the same location with Hartwig as manager. The firm continued in business until the mid-1930s. Christian, who had come to Fort Wayne in 1846, resided at 333 East Main Street and lived to be seventy-eight.

At what became 106 East Columbia, Abraham Hyman opened Sam's Clothing Store in the 1870s. The business ran into financial difficulty, and Hyman loaded up his stock and departed on August 2, 1876. The wagon train was intercepted in New Haven by Constable John Robbins who impounded and warehoused the stock.

East of the fire alley, the only one along all of former Columbia Street, Henry Klebe operated a harness shop for many years; at number 122 was the J. M. Stouder hardware store. Stouder, an authority on Indian lore, was responsible for the identification of the bones of Miami Chief Little Turtle when his grave was unexpectedly opened during the excavation of a basement of the late George W. Gillie residence.

It was on the south side of this block that the Fort Wayne Saddlery operated for many years under the management of Frank Singery. The business finally was moved to the east end of Superior Street near Spy Run Avenue Bridge.

This block also saw the coming and going of the J. B. Keely Grocery and Saloon, the Kline grocery, the Baker Ale House and the Baker Brothers Saloon.

There was another oasis at 126 known as the "White Glove Saloon." There is a record that belies its name: On April 24, 1894 proprietor John Gronendyke and Police Chief Frank Wilkinson fought almost to the death: both were badly injured. Gronendyke was

arrested on a charge of assault with intent to kill.

WEST COLUMBIA LIVES ON IN MODERN PATTERN

A dash of Fort Wayne's old flavor had been preserved by a happy pairing of sentiment and enterprise.

This escape into yesterday is provided by the 100 block of West Columbia Street, the only block of the city's one-time main thoroughfare to survive urban redevelopment. It has become an interesting contrast to the pattern of today through the efforts of Mrs. Edward (Joan) White, wife of a Fort Wayne industrialist, and a number of cooperating individuals and agencies.

Officially, this nostalgic business block became known as "The Landing" in 1965--the area once paralleled busy docks of the Wabash and Erie Canal which fed its hotels and grain mills. Now butted against the new City-County Building, West Columbia will in coming years provide a unique and sharp contrast of metropolitan today and yesterday.

West Columbia is the only business corridor that has echoed all the sounds of mass transportation; the chop-chopping of shod horses, the trumpeting of canalboat skippers, the hoarse bark of the steam locomotive, the rattle of streetcars and the rumble of the diesels. To this din the automobile added its unmuffled staccato. The street has been rocked, too, by sonic booms.

The west end of the block, at Harrison Street, once sloughed away into a great bulge of the canal known as the Orbison Basin. The basins gave leeway for maneuvering and turning the canalboats.

The Orbison basin, which took its name from an enterprising miller, made a crescent through what is now the northeast corner of Columbia and Harrison streets. It took out the north side of that block the space now occupied by the last two business structures.

The shore activities that developed around the basin gave the western terminus of Columbia Street its hotels and grain mills.

West Columbia is bisected by a significant boundary--a reminder of the city's small beginning. The eastern half of the block was a part of the original plat of the city of Fort Wayne, as laid out by the community's first land brokers, Barr and McCorkle. The west half of the block belonged to the Taber Addition.

Just west of the Orbison Basin was a causeway of earthen fill leading to the Harrison Street Bridge over the canal. West of the causeway was a smaller basin known as the "George"; these lagoons served the canal traffic in the same way the switching yards of the railroads that followed.

The Hill and Orbison Mill on the basin was a forerunner of the milling industry that was to develop along this block and on eastward. Hill and Orbison were followed by the varied enterprises of Solomon Bash and his descendants who became prominent merchants in the area of grain, seeds, feeds, hides, produce and the milling of flour, as represented by the Mayflower Mills, the Volland Mills and Wayne Feeds.

Until the early part of the century, the city's leading hotels were located on West Columbia, the first being the Columbia House, operated for many years by Dana Columbia after whom the street was named. Hotels that followed in the wake of industry were the American House, the Tremont House, Wayne Hotel, the Jones Hotel and now the tastefully refitted Rosemarie, all on the same site.

The Franklin House once operated just west of the American House, and at the west end of the street stood the Brunswick, followed by the Randall Hotel, a landmark for many years. All were the result of intense business activity along this block.

Perhaps the first business on West Columbia Street was the trading post of Capt. James B. Bourie and John B. Peltier in an area northwest of what is now Columbia and Calhoun streets. A log structure, it was eventually destroyed by fire. Later members

of the Ewing family, who developed a fur empire, operated a trading center on the site.

Columbia Street actually terminated at the lobby of the Randall Hotel, and beside the Randall, on Pearl Street, was located the city's first electric railway (interurban) station.

The first scheduled interurban service was inaugurated December 12, 1901, between Fort Wayne and Huntington, and shortly afterwards the terminal made its appearance on the northwest corner of Pearl and Harrison streets.

The coaches loaded and discharged passengers in the street, and the first depot had simple accommodations--a ticket office, waiting room and an area devoted to baggage and express.

Tracks serving the first terminal were laid on Pearl and Harrison streets and along the block of West Columbia Street. Cars bound for Kendallville and Waterloo were routed east over West Columbia to Calhoun Street, north to Superior and west to Wells Street. Cars or trains bound for Van Wert, Lima and Decatur turned south at Columbia and Calhoun streets.

Thus, West Columbia Street carried an almost hourly flow of interurban traffic until the services north and into Ohio were discontinued in 1935.

The railway traffic lessened in 1912 when a residence property was converted into an enlarged passenger terminal on West Main Street on the present site of an auto auction lot. The increasing popularity of interurban travel forced the abandonment of the Pearl Street terminal after little more than a decade.

Never was access more convenient to the business life of West Columbia Street than during the era of the fast, clean electric car.

COLUMBIA STREET GAVE WORLD A NEW TEXTURE

While Columbia Street reveled in the traffic of

the trading area, two men compounded a new texture for living in the back room of its original drug store.

This new leavening agent that tossed pastries to the imagination gained such immediate acceptance that Columbia Street is not even remembered for it, and the names of the inventors barely sift out of history.

Fort Wayne housewives, of course, were the first to use this mixture of sodium bicarbonate, starch and tartaric acid that added so much to their baking. This was about 1867 and the acceptance of the household powder here quickly led to the founding of the Royal Baking Powder Company in Chicago.

This now indispensable household product was compounded on the site of the present four-story building at 506 South Calhoun, at the east end of The Landing. In recent years the building has been sporadically vacant: the last occupant was the Allen Business Machine Company.

For many years this site on the northwest corner of Calhoun and Columbia streets was devoted to the drug business--in fact, the city's first drug store was established there in 1848 by Colonel Hugh B. Reed. It survived a \$12,000 fire that broke out in an adjacent business on September 3, 1864 but on June 30 of 1866 was sold to a pair known only today as Biddle and Hoagland from Troy, Ohio. Upon disposing of the business, Reed retired.

It was Biddle and Hoagland who gave baking powder to the world. Soon after tests of the product in Fort Wayne they opened a branch in Chicago in 1867 for its manufacture. Hoagland left the firm in 1868 to devote his full time to the manufacture of Royal Baking Powder in Chicago, while Biddle chose to remain here. The Hoagland interests were purchased by a Mr. Brandriff, and the firm became known as Biddle and Brandriff.

There is no known record of when Biddle and Brandriff ceased operations, but they were succeeded on the site by the Dreier Drug Company which had been formed in 1866 and was incorporated in 1910 with William H. Dreier as president, Charles F. Freese,

vice-president and Martin F. Scheele, secretary-treasurer.

Freese, who began work on the northwest corner, later spent some time in Chicago. Returning to Fort Wayne, he became associated with the Meyer Brothers Drug Company and in 1900, along with M. F. Scheele, bought into the business and leased the Dreier store.

In 1920, the firm opened another store at 1402 South Calhoun and the present store moved to the southwest corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets. There the atmosphere and flavor of the old-fashioned ice cream parlor were maintained for many years. The business discontinued after the death of Mr. Freese.

Neighboring the birthplace of baking powder, 108 West Columbia, was the Yankee Grocery, believed to have been the city's first general store. It was founded by Charles M. Wells, a bachelor, in 1844 soon after he came to the city from New England. Wells, who lived with his sisters, Almira and Ruth at Barr and Madison streets, died in 1883.

This pioneer grocery store gave way to a crockery and glassware business which had been founded on East Main Street by Horatio M. Ward, in the 1870s. Ward's unusual advertising gimmick made the store known all over the area: it was a life-sized paper-mache dog placed in the entranceway with a sign "I am Ward's dog, whose dog are you?" Ward sold out to M. F. Kaag, and in 1899 the business was destroyed by a fire which also ravaged the George DeWald store. The paper dog found its way into the Creighton Williams family and was moved to Lake Everett, where it disappeared.

The structure at 108 has been sporadically idle down through the years: it was occupied successively by Altschul Produce, the McCoy Hatchery, dealers in Laval equipment and Busco Feeds, and finally as a warehouse for the Butler Paper Company.

A stimulant to Allen County corn production existed at number 112 where Frank Alderman operated an implement business and offered premiums for high corn yields. The winner in 1880 was George Ziemer

of Springfield Township with a yield of 112 bushels.

Earlier, a harness business was run there by Samuel H. Shoaff who came to the city January 21, 1841 with his bride of five weeks. He later moved to 119 West Columbia.

This site also housed a forerunner of the Mossman-Yarnelle Company which later grew into a new business block on nearby Pearl Street. Marshall Coombs, who started an iron, steel and hardware business on the southeast corner of Main and Clinton streets in 1870, first affiliated with Edward F. Yarnelle, a partnership that existed until 1882 when Yarnelle entered partnership with Frank Alderman, forming the Alderman-Yarnelle Company. In 1887 Alderman retired and sold his interest to William E. Mossman, and the firm became Mossman-Yarnelle Company. This firm absorbed the failing Coombs business in 1893 and in 1906, moved into the present Pearl Street building.

In 1894, two days after a total loss fire at Lafayette and Brackenridge streets, the Moellering Brothers & Millard wholesale grocery firm moved into 110 West Columbia and a year later decided to remain on Columbia. In 1907 the firm leased the adjoining building, 112 West Columbia as an expansion. Meanwhile the firm's original building at Brackenridge and Lafayette streets was rebuilt as a warehouse. The Moellering Brothers, William and Henry, later became involved in a partnership and the firm operated as Moellering Brothers & Green until about 1929 when it was dissolved.

The Western Newspaper Union located in the building at 110-112 West Columbia in November 1929 and in 1935 it became the Butler Paper Company. The stock of the firm was heavily damaged by a fire on October 16, 1941 and in 1965 Butler Paper Company moved to its present location on Engle Road.

Since that time the building has sheltered the "Why-Not" tavern which was succeeded for a time by Bimbo's of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Currently this historic site is occupied by The Pickle with a kitchen that specializes in luncheons and dinner menus.

As The Landing, this surviving block of Columbia Street still follows the traditional pattern of variety.

BASH INFLUENCE STRONG UPON A BUSINESS BLOCK

Much of the development of West Columbia Street resulted from various business enterprises of the Bash family.

Though buildings still bear the Bash name, the family was not one to parade its genealogy, and so chronology of Bash influence upon this original main street of the city is not on record.

Solomon Bash, the first to make an appearance in business here, was born in Starke County, Ohio in 1827, and his first local experience was apparently as a clerk in the Hill & Orbison Mill. Charles and Willis were other members of the family who engaged in milling operations and merchandised in produce, wool, furs, hides, pelts, seeds and butter.

Spaced along the Wabash & Erie Canal waterfront were a total of six mills. Four of them on the south side of the waterway were steam operated. Two mills on the north side of the canal were water-powered, drawing their water from the canal and draining into the St. Mary's River. These were French-Hanna & Company east of Barr Street and the Tusselt or City Mills at Clinton Street. Later these mills were converted to steam.

At City Mills it was not unusual for farmers who arrived late with their grain to sleep overnight in the mill offices, waiting for the grain to be processed the first thing in the morning.

For many years Columbia Street catered to the rural people of Allen County and neighboring areas and served as a market place for the growing city as well. A spin-off from the agricultural trade was the

Barr Street Farmers Market which operated on adjacent Barr Street for more than 100 years. The market place was abandoned in 1967 and the pillared shelters subsequently removed.

A singular development came late in the 19th Century that began to change the tempo of business along Columbia Street and was responsible for the decline of farm markets over much of the country. In 1880 United States census showed for the first time a greater urban than rural population.

Farm patronage was attracted to Columbia Street because of its many saddleries, harness shops, smithies, boot and shoe stores, implement and hardware establishments and a scattering of livery stables in the area.

Saloons were numerous and convenient for all traders along the street. They became famous for a free counter lunch with the purchase of a five-cent glass of beer, a ten-cent slug of aged whiskey or, if the patron chose, a boilermaker and helper--a shot of whiskey washed down with a glass of beer. There were no mixed drinks in that day, only the boilermaker and helper.

A farmer would bring his cargo to Columbia Street, and after it had been sold would attend to purchases of supplies for the week or a longer period. It was common practice to meet with friends over a drink to discuss matters of interest while the wagons were being repaired or the horses shod.

The slowing of farm trade was a factor in the gradual decline of the street over a period of thirty or forty years. Finally much of Columbia Street was devoted to wholesale houses and warehousing with scattered service establishments.

Other factors that brought change to the business complexion were the flexible transportation afforded by the automobile and motor truck and the more recent establishment of outlying shopping centers. Motor transport relaxed the dependence upon railroads with their back door tracks and sidings.

Merchants could locate at sites of their own choosing assured of store-door deliveries. A trend

toward more modern business accommodations induced merchants to move away from Columbia Street to where off-street space for automobile parking was available.

A facet of the Bash family business history that cannot be clarified is that Solomon Bash is known to have served as a clerk in the drygoods store of D. N. Bash in 1858 at 125 West Columbia. Later he launched a wool, hide, fur and seed business with a man named



North side of the 100 block of
West Columbia Street

Eakin at 61 Columbia Street. The firm was known as Bash & Eakin, and Solomon established residence at 242 West Berry.

Later the firm was reorganized as S. Bash & Company with Solomon Bash as president; his partners included a son, Charles, P. D. Smyser and a Mr. McKinn. Following the death of Solomon Bash the son Charles became head of the business.

Charles Bash was born on a farm near Roanoke and in later years became associated with the Salomonie Gas Company; his home on West Wayne Street was the first in the city to be heated with natural gas.

Charles Bash erected the building at 130-32 West Columbia occupied until recently by the Protective Electric Supply Company. What information is available on the Bash family was gathered by the late Edward Dodez, for many years an active member of the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.

BUSINESS FIRMS REMIND OF STREET'S PAST GLORY

Two business giants, Fisher Brothers Paper Company and Mayflower Mills currently remind residents of the one-time importance of Columbia Street to the city's development.

These firms had their origin on the north side of the only remaining block of Columbia known as The Landing since 1965. Mayflower was an enterprise of the progressive Bash family and a general-alarm fire that induced the mill to leave West Columbia Street provided an opportunity for expansion of the paper company.

An example of the versatility of enterprise on Columbia Street, Mayflower developed out of a linseed oil mill which in the early 1880s was a scene of a fire that threatened to lay waste to West Columbia Street, endangering even more of the Bash interests. Joseph Hughes and Solomon Bash organized the linseed operation at 118-20 West Columbia in the early 1880s and the fire, causing damage of \$25,000, struck July 16, 1887.

Flames threatened the S. Bash & Company produce and commission house immediately to the west. Rebuilding of the mill was started almost immediately, but it never resumed operations--events happened too quickly.

Mayflower Mills, which had been organized in 1886 by Charles Bash, began operations in 1889 at the rebuilt linseed mill building. Actual transfer of the structure to Mayflower did not come until March 20, 1891, and equipment of the linseed mill was shipped to Buffalo, New York and Minneapolis, Minnesota and was absorbed by plants of the National Linseed Oil Trust.

In the space of two years, the Mayflower Mills were operating full blast, around the clock. Widely known flours of the firm were "Silver Dust" and "Silver Dollar" and a cake flour known as "Martha Wayne."

On May 21, 1911 fire revisited the site and this second mill was destroyed at \$150,000 loss. This business interruption, coupled with already cramped quarters on Columbia Street, led the milling company to its present site on Leesburg Road at the Norfolk & Western Railroad. Associated with Mayflower through the years were Harry, David, Edward and Robert Bash.

The paper company actually began with the business partnership of Samuel F. Fisher and Harry Graffe March 27, 1882 as Fisher and Graffe. They bought out A. M. Webb, a leather goods firm at Berry and Clinton streets. Six weeks later Max B. Fisher purchased Graffe interests and the firm became Fisher Brothers Paper. As the business prospered, several moves were made to satisfy expansion, and at the time of the Mayflower fire, Fisher Brothers was located at 130-32 West Columbia.

The brothers immediately purchased the Mayflower site and constructed a six-story building with terra-cotta front, into which the firm moved in 1913. They remained at the location until early 1970 when the operation was moved to a new 40,000 square-foot warehouse on a 2 1/2 acre site just off the Engle Road in the southwestern part of the city.

For many years the firm has operated Jackson Paper at Jackson, Michigan and through the years acquired Becker Paper Company, Consolidated Paper Company, and the Sanitary Supply Sales Company.

Roger I. Fisher became associated with the

company on June 20, 1910; his father, Samuel Fisher, died in December of 1922; Roger's uncle, Edwin, had passed away several years earlier, and another uncle, Max Fisher, died in 1932. Roger I. Fisher, current president of the company, has been associated with the firm more than half a century.

The structure at 114 West Columbia, vacant for a number of years, last was occupied by J. W. Bash & Company, operating as Wayne Feeds. The first business of record in the structure was Frank C. Stophlet who went under the firm name of Stophlet Brothers home furnishers. A change of the firm name came later to Stophlet & Company, and the field was changed to public lighting. As agents for the Underhill patent lamp, the firm had a contract in 1876 for lighting the suburbs of Toledo, Ohio. This apparently was a lamp using gas, for electric arc lighting was not introduced until 1878, and electrical public lighting did not become general until the early 20th Century.

Later the building was occupied by the Vollard Mills, an enterprise of Fred and Otto Vollard and subsequently the Wayne-Bash-Seed Company.

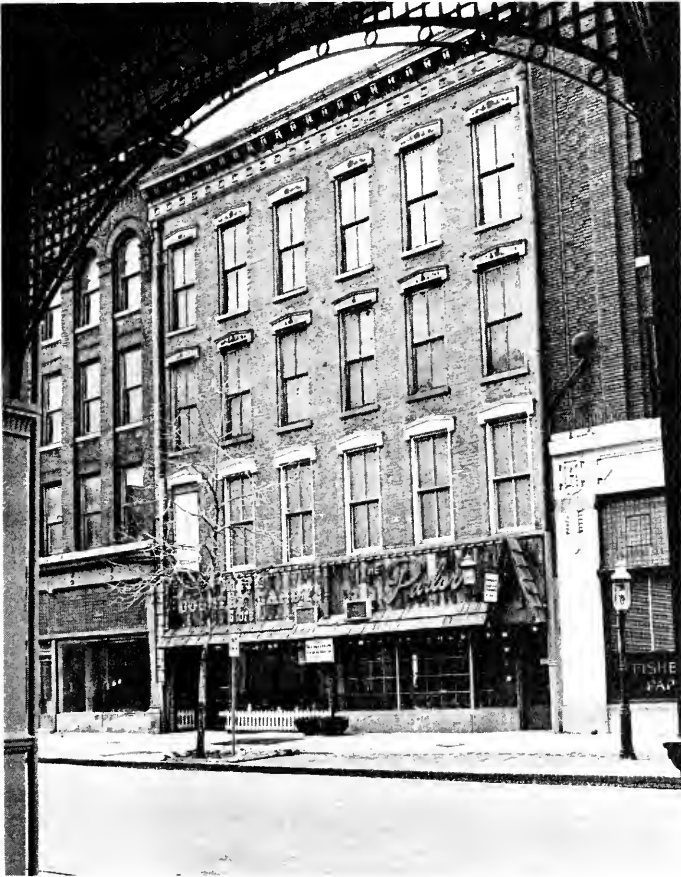
Another vacant structure at 116 West Columbia was erected by the F. H. George Company, processors and dealers in dairy products. The butter of this firm carried the brand name of "Rosemary" and became widely known in the Fort Wayne area.

A preceding building on this site was occupied by W. B. Smith tobacco merchants; Fred Weikel, a well driller and dealer in water pumps, also occupied this earlier site for many years.

FIRST LODGE, NEWSPAPER CHOSE SITES ON LANDING

A vintage ice cream parlor and country candy store, which cater to those with a sweet tooth on The Landing in 19th Century fashion, stand on the site of

the city's first Masonic Lodge building which later was occupied by Fort Wayne's first newspaper. The present four-story building was built about 1880 by S. Bash & Company and bears the numbers 122-24.



The first fraternal order chartered in north-eastern Indiana was Wayne Lodge No. 25, Free and Accepted Masons, and the installation was conducted November 10, 1823 in the old fort, abandoned as a military post several years earlier.

Meeting places for such organizations and other groups were at a premium at the time; aside from several taverns the only other available space was provided by the old County Seminary on the west side of Calhoun north of Superior Street then known as Water Street because of its proximity to the Wabash & Erie Canal. John P. Hedges was the first schoolmaster there, and when his classes were not in session, the school was used for church and political meetings. Wayne Lodge divided its meetings between the Seminary and the first court house.

Tiring of the uncertainties posed by temporary quarters, members of Wayne Lodge launched plans for their own lodge home in 1825, but it was four years before the organization could arrange for the purchase of a lot from John T. Barr, John McCorkle and Joseph Holman at what is now 122-24 West Columbia. A two-story building was erected on the site and used by the lodge for its meetings.

Financial difficulties forced the sale of the lot and building on June 3, 1833 to Holman, Richard L. Britton, Francis Comparet, Alexis Coquillard and Hugh Hanna. The stipulation was only \$1,328.

Until 1880, when the first temple was erected on the northeast corner of Wayne and Clinton streets, Wayne Lodge conducted its meetings at various places, including Kaiser's Hall, Stewart's Hall, the McDougal Building and a hall over the Post Office building on Court Street. The present Masonic Temple on East Washington Boulevard was dedicated in 1926. Vacation of the first lodge building might have hurried a movement for the establishment of the city's first newspaper. Henry Rudisill, wealthy miller, is identified as a spokesman in negotiations with two Indianapolis men, S. V. B. Noel and Thomas Tigar to come here and publish a newspaper.

Rudisill and his associates offered \$500 for the purchase of a press, which was to become a property of the backers, if the newspaper did not pay off the sum after a year. Tigar and Noel declined the loan and managed to get their own equipment together; their printing equipment was a Washington hand press

formerly used to publish the Indiana State Journal at Indianapolis.

A wagon train brought the appurtenances of the first newspaper to Fort Wayne--a hazardous venture over muddy roads requiring six days. The press and office equipment were installed in the former lodge building and the first newspaper became The Sentinel, a label that has remained since that time.

The first issue of The Sentinel went on the streets July 6, 1833 and prominently reprinted the Declaration of Independence. The first local story was a report of the Independence Day celebration which had occurred two days earlier.

Editor Tigar, was a native of Yorkshire, England and a forceful writer. A Democrat politically, he remained editor of The Sentinel until 1865. His death occurred ten years later at the age of sixty-seven.

In later years The Sentinel was merged with the Fort Wayne News and became the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel. The merged newspapers once occupied a building at 114 West Wayne and later established a plant at the corner of Washington Boulevard and Barr Street, now the Foellinger Center.

After the newspaper era, the Masonic building was occupied for a time by Solomon S. Smick, a dealer in farm machinery. Forced into bankruptcy, Smick assigned his real estate and personal property, amounting to \$46,048 to creditors on January 3, 1876.

S. Bash & Company, replaced the Masonic building with its present four-story structure which in 1887 was heavily damaged by a fire which gutted the adjoining linseed oil mill controlled by the Bash family. For many years after it was repaired, the Bash interests used the structure for warehousing, and a portion of it was later occupied by Bell's Five-And-Ten Cent Store.

About 1940 the long-established Meyers Brothers Drug Company moved its general offices into the structure and used the excess space for warehousing. Meyers later moved offices to the eastern section of the city.

During the development of The Landing as a practical shrine to the canal era in Fort Wayne the street floor of the structure was outfitted as Ma and Pa's Candy Store and the Old Ice Cream Parlor, both preserving the tastes and atmosphere of the 19th Century. Both are operated by Edward Collins as unique features of The Landing development.

BASIN SITE BECAME MANUFACTURING HUB

The northeast corner of Columbia and Harrison streets has been significant both to the development of transportation and the growth of the city.

The site was once part of the Orbison Basin of the Wabash & Erie Canal. This 80 by 110 foot pool enabled canalboats to turn around and gave access to the Hill & Orbison Mill, one of Indiana's largest during the waterway boom. The building itself was used for many years by the Protective Electric Supply Company.

In 1876 the Orbison Basin was filled in and real estate plans developed. These plans were abandoned when the canal right-of-way was sold to the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad on February 12, 1881. And so the Norfolk & Western (formerly Nickel Plate) still follows the route of the waterway through the city.

Alexander M. Orbison and John E. Hill, as partners in a commission business offering grain, hides, wool, seeds and other products, established themselves on the rim of the basin and subsequently became wealthy. Orbison was one of the incorporators of Lindenwood Cemetery and was deeply involved in work of the Fort Wayne Relief Society. The mill, established in 1846, died with the Canal and Orbison operated briefly in the 200 block of East Columbia Street before moving his interests to Sturgis, Michigan.

A few years after the basin was filled Charles Bash began the construction of a two-level stretch of buildings extending for 120 feet along West Columbia

Street and stretching 110 feet back to the canal docks. The center section of the building was built six stories high with adjoining wings of four stories each and are part of Fort Wayne's historic Landing.



This is the Bash Block taken about 1897 showing the four-story east and west portions of the building and the six-story center section. This building involved numbers 126 to 136 West Columbia Street. Built by Charles Bash in the 1880s.

The Bash interests retained use of the eastern wing for many years, and when they suspended business, Standard Oil established local offices there. In 1918 the oil suppliers offices were moved to the bulk plant on the Leesburg Road. Subsequently Meyer

Brothers Drug used the premises for warehousing, and the last occupant was Frank's appliance division.

Bash erected the central building specifically for the use of A. L. John & Company, manufacturer of fine harness on the fifth and sixth floors. Windows on the four sides gave ample light for the work. The firm used the lower floors for warehousing and retailing. At the time it was the oldest and largest harness firm in the state.

Besides an extensive line of buggy, driving and team harness the firm was involved in saddlery, hardware, whips, collars, fly nets, lap robes, leather dressings and even axle grease.

After the harness firm suspended business, the central portion was occupied by Fisher Brothers Paper until the Mayflower Mill fire of 1911, when they purchased the site and in 1913 moved into a newer building at that address, 118-120 West Columbia Street.

A firm of wide reputation followed Fisher Brothers into the building--the Protective Electric Supply Company. Back in 1906 M. B. Larimer perfected a lightning arrestor and protective device marketed as the "Protective Can Top Cable Terminator," and with E. M. Popp formed a company to manufacture the device. Both men formerly were associated with Home Telephone & Telegraph and most of their business was absorbed by the telephone company.

The first site of the company was on Clinton Street, but larger quarters were needed in a few years, and it moved to West Columbia Street across the street from the former Bash Building. Five years later they moved into the Bash property. Protective soon branched into other electrical equipment including radios.

Officers of the company before business was suspended in 1967 were Milton B. Larimer, chairman of the board; Thomas G. Popp, president and Herbert W. Henline, treasurer.

The west section of the Bash Building, numbered 134-36, was used for many years by the H. W. Skelton Wholesale Grocery, a firm that was succeeded by Beyer Grocery. Finally, the west portion was absorbed by the Protective Electric Supply Company.

CANAL SKIPPER'S LEGACY WAS LASTING HOTEL SITE

What Dana Columbia really meant to the early community has become a vague subject, but he chose a hotel site that remained true to purpose for nearly 140 years.

A unique hotel property on The Landing, called the Rosemarie, is a former canalboat captain's legacy to the modern weary. Seven hotels as distinguished by changes of management have occupied four different buildings on this same stretch of earth except for the brief interlude after a devastating fire in 1867.

Entrenched perhaps more than ever in Victorian atmosphere, the name Rosemarie might not have served the hostelry so well in years past. The flowering years knew it as the American, the Tremont and the Wayne Hotel. The widely respected Jasper (Jap) Jones acquired the hotel property in the early 1930s and restored much of its lost magnetism. During his regime it was the Jones Hotel.

Refurnished recently as the Rosemarie, the ninety-five room hotel has regained its old charm in a downtown area that has been reserved for 19th Century ways.

In 1831 Dana Columbia built a log hotel there and named it the Columbia House. Five years later during the country's first financial panic Columbia House was replaced by the American House; Joseph Morgan was the financier during this unseemingly time for investment, and the property later was operated by Francis Comparet.

Presumably the panic changed the course of Columbia's career, but his hotel site has remained down to the present.

For thirty-one years the American House served the growing public needs in Fort Wayne, and then it was destroyed by fire--the final proprietors were a Mr. Butt and F. F. Dean.

In structure the Rosemarie dates back to 1868 when the New American House, a three-story brick, replaced the ruins of the frame American House. The

new hotel opened March 5 of that year with J. C. Hursh as manager. Later, he was replaced by Colonel Chauncey B. Oakley. Bernard H. Schneiders became owner of the hotel property on September 6, 1876, and Oakley retired from the hotel business.

Less than a year later, March 8, 1877, the hotel's name was changed to Tremont House and C. C. Fletcher simultaneously assumed management. The record indicates a declining period for the hotel which ended abruptly on December 7, 1887, with its purchase by John C. Peters, the grandfather of actress Carole Lombard. There followed a renovation of the property which included the addition of a fourth floor.

There was a refreshment of management, too-- Peters leased the hotel under improvement to Captain Henry McKinnie, a hotel man of wide experience, and his son, William, for a period of ten years. The name was changed too, and the Tremont opened for business February 1, 1888 as the Wayne Hotel.

The Wayne Hotel Annex begun March 12, 1889 and completed the following year made up the present facade of the Rosemarie and added 20 per cent to the hotel capacity. The building was enlarged eastward. Now, the locally famous old hotel was ready for the gay 90s!

The reign of Wayne Hotel in Fort Wayne and the Midwest is bracketed between the year 1909 and 1930. As Fort Wayne's leading hotel of the period, its service and cuisine was unequalled in the Midwest. Its register carried the names of the country's leaders in the fields of industry, politics, entertainment and the sciences. It played host to three presidents: Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield and Benjamin Harrison and other national figures.

On October 21, 1896 presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan spoke from the marquee of the Wayne Hotel. His audience on the street was so dense that a number of store windows around the hotel were shattered by the press of humanity. After the speech, Mr. Bryan was hosted by R. C. Bell at his home on West Wayne Street, the present Klaehn Funeral Home.

The parlors of the Wayne became a mecca for

innovations and public gatherings. The first "writing telegraph"--a forerunner of the modern teletype--was exhibited and experimented within the lobby of the hotel. The machine attracted a distinguished gathering of electricians, scientists and telegraphers to the city in April, 1891.

A Century Commercial Club which later developed into the Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce was organized at the Wayne Hotel February 16, 1895 when articles of agreement were signed by forty-five prominent businessmen. Mayor Charles F. Muhler was named president after Louis Fox declined the nomination.

On December 29, 1899 the Wayne Hotel Barber Shop had installed the first hydraulic barber chair used in the city.

At the termination of the McKinnie lease, Peters negotiated with William McKinnie for purchase of the hotel furnishings. The hotel was closed by this development between January 4 and 10, 1898. The elder McKinnie, who came to Fort Wayne after the close of the Civil War, died October 1, 1899 at the age of seventy-seven. While in Fort Wayne he also established McKinnie House, a hotel operated in conjunction with the old Pennsylvania Railroad Station which once stood between Clinton and Calhoun streets.

Various improvements were made to the hotel in November, 1899 including the installation of its own electric plant. In June, 1901 there was a \$25,000 fire loss at the hotel--thirty-five guests were evacuated without incident.

A. W. McClure sold a half interest in the hotel property to Charles E. Young of Swannanoa, North Carolina on April 3, 1905. A few days later the North Carolina man filed a legal action charging misrepresentation.

The city's growth to the south put the Wayne Hotel off the beaten path early in the century, particularly with construction of the Anthony Hotel in 1909 and the Keenan in 1923. The Wayne began to lose the interest of community gatherings which patronized newer accommodations.

This decline was arrested in the early 1930s under the Jones management, and through services and remodeling Jap managed to restore a portion of the hostelry's old popularity. However, it was patronized largely by the retired and people of moderate income.

On New Year's Day, 1967 the venerable hotel began a new era under the ownership of Mr. and Mrs. John E. Arnold and Lenna Belle Arnold operating as the Jems Realty Corporation. They negotiated the purchase of the property from Mrs. Hazel Jones, widow of the former owner.

In deference to the atmosphere of The Landing and its offering of old elegance to the modern world, the hotel name was changed to Rosemarie.

The old charm of the hotel is being preserved to fit this 19th Century capsule of downtown Fort Wayne--The Landing development. There are such eye-pieces as a base-burner stove, kerosene lamps and other conveniences of yesterday.

Untouched are the marble staircases of the hotel, the rich mosaic floors and the stained and bevel-glass windows. Many of the hotel's ninety-five rooms have been redecorated and furnished in period, an enchanting contrast to the patterns of today.

The Rosemarie had entered a new era after reaching deeply into the gracious facets of the past to keep company with The Landing--a soft light refuge that compliments both yesterday and today.

THE LANDING'S GROWTH DATED BY PHOTOGRAPH

For hindsight on the one block of once arterial Columbia Street to survive redevelopment the archives are indebted to the whim of an early artist, John H. Dille, who photographed in 1865 what is now The Landing from a perch high on the old brick court house.

This view establishes that much of the development of this business block began after the Civil War,

probably in the 1870s. The only portion of the 100 block of West Columbia Street that has been consistently occupied through the years since 1831 is the Rosemarie Hotel.

Perhaps the first structure erected in this section after the Civil War was the Keystone Block at the southwest corner of Calhoun and Columbia streets, one of the largest to be built up to that time and the first in the city to be equipped with running water and central heating.

On an upper floor were the offices of a respected dentist, Dr. Isaac Knapp, and the street floor once housed a famous variety store founded by James "Jimmie" Kane. It featured display cases on the sidewalks!

The Dille photograph shows only the American House hotel (predecessor of the Rosemarie) and immediately to the west a federal-type structure believed to have been the old Franklin House. Neighboring Franklin House on the west was a two-story frame structure, painted white in which the artist maintained a studio and completed his first painting in 1852. Between this building and Harrison Street was a shed-like structure, its frame considerably weathered and possibly occupied by the Fry tannery. If so, it enjoyed a certain isolation.

The Keystone Building held a business popularity from the start, and one of the early occupants was the Taylor and Freeman Drygoods Company. This firm was succeeded on March 15, 1866 by the Nirdlinger & Oppenheimer Drygoods firm; Nirdlinger served on the City Council in 1853 and 1865. He died in 1873, leaving an estate of \$150,000.

William H. Hahn founded the Boston Store in 1886 and commenced business in the Keystone Building at 606 on the South Calhoun site; the building was an "L" fronting on both Calhoun and Columbia streets. In the early 1900s the Boston Store moved to 620 South Calhoun but returned to the original location in a few years.

The Boston Store was sold to J. L. Goldman who in 1932 moved the business southward, following busi-

ness trend, to 110 East Berry. At this time the store was under the management of Myron Goldman.

The James M. Kane & Son Variety Store on the corner was operated prior to 1910; the proprietor died on July 9 of that year.

More recent occupants of the Keystone Building have been Sigrist Furniture and Sheray Furniture.

Before the Keystone Block joined the downtown scene, Freeman P. Tinkham operated a cabinet shop at what is now 109 West Columbia. Apparently no records exist on this operation.

Prior to establishment of the Rosemarie Hotel Annex (originally known as the Wayne Hotel Annex) at 111 West Columbia, the site was occupied by the Leichner saloon. Upon his retirement in 1872 the structure was connected to a billiard hall, and later the building was occupied by the Goodman Saloon. A succeeding tenant was the DuWan Sign Company, later the Jones Hotel snack shop and currently Johnny's Gold Mine.

Immediately west of the Rosemarie, bearing the street number 123, was the site of another hostelry known as the Franklin House, operated for years by Mills and Taylor. Some believe this building was originally the homesite of Francis Comparet, wealthy Fort Wayne business pioneer who built a home on the street in 1835. Others think it was located between Calhoun and Clinton streets.

There have been buildings on this site since Franklin House, and the earliest known business operation there was Paul's Grocery.

Five years after it was organized March 24, 1902 with capitalization of \$100,000 the Wayne Shoe Company was moved to Number 123 from leased quarters at Pearl and Harrison streets. William F. Moelling, heading the firm, planned the eventual employment of 200 persons in the business. On February 9, 1909 the stock was destroyed by a \$75,000 fire and the site was absorbed by Protective Electric which in 1912 moved across the street to 130-32 West Columbia.

In 1910 a firm came to 123 that eventually be-

came an international household word--the Pinex Company. The founder of the firm was William H. Noll, and it produced a variety of products, notably Pinex, a cough syrup that served as a popular remedy for many years in American and Canadian homes.

Ten years ago Pinex was sold to Revlon of New York and became a part of Revlon's wholly-owned Thayer Laboratories with Bernard T. Kearns as local manager. Later, Revlon withdrew holdings from Fort Wayne, and the property is now occupied by the Beauty Supply Company.



South side of 100 block West Columbia looking east from Harrison Street.

During the busiest years the Pinex Company purchased the adjoining building, Number 125, from the Borgmann trucking interests and interconnected the two buildings for its own use. This gave the firm a total frontage of forty feet on Columbia Street.

What prompted artist Dille to sight his camera upon West Columbia Street is something that has been

erased by the years. There may be a hidden significance in the picture besides a clue to the business life of the street.

It shows the present Landing in a straggly phase of growth--perhaps dormant from the exhausting strain of the Civil War. If this is so, The Landing, preserved as a section of old Fort Wayne, also reflects the return of a warweary city to constructive enterprise.

SPICY THEATER CLOSED IN MORE PURITAN ERA

When buttonholes were effective holds upon government function, G. G. Grady's Variety Theater at 127 West Columbia appealed to unimaginative audiences for the short span of five months and then was closed as "Fort Wayne's biggest nuisance."

Mr. Grady likely was in business for several months before the community became fully aware of what was going on. His Variety Show deserves mention because on November 18, 1872 it probably became the first tenant at Number 127 on The Landing. It's short span of activity attests to the effectiveness of the public's buttonhole lobby late in the 19th Century.

Today, Variety Theater likely would be laughed out of business in a much shorter time. For the record, it closed its doors April 18, 1873 and all references on the nature of the shows presented there have been expunged by public disdain.

Charles W. Getz, who came to Fort Wayne in 1877 and established a brickyard on the Illinois Road, later formed a partnership with Charles Orr and established a grocery business there which continued until shortly after the death of Mr. Getz in 1942.

Next door, at 129, Louis Schroeder operated a saloon for many years until the Gutermuth Bakery occupied the premises. The Gutermuths operated a restaurant along with the Bakery which became widely

known in the Fort Wayne area and a mecca for the weekend farmer trade. Each table in the restaurant was supplied with a fresh loaf of bread on a board so patrons could slice off what they wished.

Once separate buildings, 127 and 129 were interconnected during the tenancy of Daniel Brothers, a Columbia City meat firm. Daniels were the last occupants of the building, presently vacant.

The Louis Blase Grocery and Bakery was the first known occupant of the building at 131 West Columbia Street. The bakery was followed by the Joseph Sampson Barber Shop. Saloonkeeper Charles Uplegger was a later tenant and the 131 Club was being operated there when a fire damaged the structure, injuring several rooming house tenants on the upper floors. The building is now occupied by Hancock Imports.

A shoemaker, George Nill, was the first known occupant at 133 West Columbia, and he was succeeded there by Henry Nill, a dealer in boots and shoes. Succeeding occupants were the Dixie Lunch, the Stephan Candy & Tobacco and the C. P. Marshall Company.

In 1965 the renovated premises became The Caboose, a tavern of vintage railway decor which became the first business in the redevelopment of the block as The Landing. Since then, The Caboose has become part of The Big Wheel tavern, a museum of Fort Wayne artifacts at Number 135 on the southeast corner of Columbia and Harrison streets.

Buildings occupied by The Caboose and The Big Wheel are estimated to be more than 100 years old--the corner restaurant and tavern formerly was the site of the Paige & Fry Tannery which some time after 1865 moved to the west side of the city near the old canal aqueduct which stretched across the St. Mary's River at approximately the present location of the Norfolk & Western railroad bridge.

Several grocers, William Shoppman and W. H. Hasket occupied the present site of The Big Wheel, and later Teresa Bouse operated a dressmaking shop there. For about a half century after that, the building consistently was occupied by taverns under various owners, the last being the Har-Col Lunch.

The remodeling of the corner structure was an extensive process of historical research and craftsmanship.

Before the building of the present tavern complex existed, there was a strange assortment of businesses, according to information gained by Mrs. J. Howard Wilkens, Fort Wayne genealogist. In 1836 Peter Kiser bravely operated a butcher shop between the odorous tannery on the corner and Henry Strong's leather shop. Across the street was the Bash warehouse.

Before the Pinex Company made the city internationally known in the way of nostrums at 125 West Columbia, this structure was the home of the William Pratt Seed Company. Pratt was one of the directors of the Indiana State Prison, a responsibility that then required monthly inspections of the penal institution. The tenure of this firm began between 1870-75, and early in the 1880s the structure was used by the McComb Hardware, a predecessor of Mossman-Yarnelle.

The Claussmeier and Archer Implement shop was the next tenant, and this firm sold the property to Brown Trucking on January 16, 1905. William Brown, the founder, was the son of John Brown an early blacksmith who came to the city in 1825.

In 1898 William Borgmann resigned as the captain of police and with John Kelker purchased the trucking firm. On July 6, 1906 the firm purchased the Fort Wayne Transfer Company and the following September sold the transfer business to A.G. Barnett. After the death of Captain Borgmann in 1905 the trucking firm was assumed by Clifford and Walter Borgmann.

The trucking firm moved to 318-20 East Douglas Avenue after the sale of the Columbia Street building to Pinex in April, 1937.

Variety Theater's brief existence on what was to become The Landing points up how history can seriously fault--there is no record of what the performances were like to serve as a comparison of standards and method today when the city of Fort Wayne is

rebellling against a profusion of smut.
It was a community experience wasted.

HOTEL MANAGER'S FAMILY KEPT THE PIPES FLOWING

No one could appreciate the luxury of running water more than the Buckles boys whose lot it was many years ago to help keep the taps running in the old Robinson House, best remembered today as the Randall Hotel. It stood at Harrison and Columbia streets.

Their father was J. H. Buckles, first proprietor of the hotel, which for more than a century stared from many windows down the length of Columbia Street.



Randall Hotel facing east on Harrison Street

The Randall, known successively as the Robinson House, Grand Hotel and Brunswick House, finally attained eminence as the "best \$2.00 hotel in Indiana," and the strong backs of the Buckles brothers (conveniently there were four) were undeniably helpful.

When the water level of the nearby Wabash and Erie Canal was too low to power a hydraulic ram (which was often) the Buckles pumped water from the wells in the basement to a reservoir on the roof which served a single tap on each floor. Water was carried in pails to the rooms but even so this was a convenience that endeared the hotel to the trade. Buckles made ice water available to his guests, too.

Manager Buckles might have been a severe father, but he appreciated the efforts of his sons: he did his best to persuade the city to convert the feeder canal into a city waterworks. It could have been had for \$250,000 from downtown six miles up the St. Joseph River to the feeder dam.

The late Winifred Randall, at one time the country's only feminine lumber buyer, was the life of the old hotel in its declining years. She died March 11, 1963 and two years later the building was razed and the site became a parking lot.

Besides running water the hostelry in early days had its own sawmill for cutting up firewood and a horse-powered elevator; all were innovations.

There was even hope the Randall could remain as a familiar backdrop for The Landing. For many years it had been maintained as a residential hotel by Mrs. Randall. Her husband, the late Perry A. Randall, had bought the property in 1889.

What was to be one of the state's leading hotels started as a three-story brick granary and tannery, built in February, 1856 by James H. Robinson. He opened a boot store on the first floor and later a tannery in the basement.

In earlier days an upper floor was occupied by a sporting organization of young people who called themselves the IKZ's. Often they dropped initiates through a trap door into the George's Basin of the old canal. But first they were roped around the waist so

they could be drawn out to safety.

The IKZ's also held bizarre parades, carrying candidates and human skeletons in coffins through the downtown district.

Buckles leased the property late in 1871 and converted it into a hotel. There was a dining room, a laundry in the basement, and the kitchen occupied a two-story building at the rear.

Coal was not generally used in the community, and the hotel was heated entirely by wood stoves. Only a few of them, however, were installed in the rooms, the majority were in the hallways. Thus, it became an expedient to set up a treadmill in a large room of the building on which usually two horses furnished the power for sawing up lumber into stove-size lengths. Sometimes three boatloads of wood were required to heat the hotel for a winter. One morning in the dead of winter a guest appeared at the desk with his beard a solid mass of frost. He had slept comfortably, but his breath had frozen among the whiskers. The hotel once weathered 28 degrees below zero.

A horse harnessed to a windlass also supplied power for the hotel's elevator. Later, hydraulic power was applied to this passenger lift.

Mrs. Mary C. Robinson, wife of the builder and a son, Henry H., eventually became owners of the hotel property. On May 17, 1876 the name of the hotel was changed to Grand Hotel, and during Buckles' tenure as manager it became theatrical headquarters for Colerick Hall.

Grand Hotel was operated as a Methodist Hotel, no drinking and no dancing. Benjamin Harrison was a guest at the hotel during his campaign for governor of Indiana, and the house always sheltered Buffalo Bill during his several appearances at Colerick's.

These distinguished guests provided rewarding experiences for the Buckles brothers. William P. recalled delivering a wash bucket and clothing to Colerick Hall to be used as "props" for a stage show; he and two brothers stayed to watch Joe Jefferson play Rip Van Winkle.

Numerous theatricals appeared at Colerick Hall,

and some stock companies stayed for the season, offering such productions as East Lynne, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Ten Nights in a Bar Room and others.

In 1881 a 24-foot section was added to the north end of the hotel building. The Buckles tenure as manager had ended by 1888, and under a new lease the name of the hotel was changed to Brunswick but only briefly. Attorney Randall purchased the hotel building from Mrs. Robinson and her son for \$45,000 in 1889.

Formal opening of the hotel under the Randall ownership came on May 23, 1890, and it soon became a popular meeting place for community groups, including the monthly round table of the ministerial association. The first annual meeting of the National Cribbage Association was held there November 17, 1892.

Randall added a 35-foot veranda to the main entrance of the hotel in 1891, and in 1894 the hotel installed its own electric plant. On Thanksgiving of that year more than 400 guests attended the annual game dinner in the hotel dining room featuring a wide selection of wild game and fowl on the menu.

Dick Townsend, who had become manager of the Randall in 1890, disposed of his lease and furnishings in 1899 to Frank W. Beard of Chicago and Joseph W. Irwin of Little Rock, Arkansas, both experienced hotel men. The consideration was \$19,300 and the new lease was for a period of fifteen years. Townsend subsequently leased the St. Charles Hotel in Toledo.

Another remodeling program had been conducted at the hotel in 1897, and at that time Randall announced that a fifty-room addition was to come later.

This enlargement of the hotel was hurried by a \$90,000 fire, October 28, 1904 that destroyed an adjacent building at 608-10 South Harrison and heavily damaged the Randall. Randall immediately made plans to rebuild the damaged section and add two floors, making a building of five stories.

Of all the competitive ventures at the Randall, the one which brought its greatest popularity was a change from American to European plan on June 19,

1907 under the managership of Frank E. Purrell. This change of program kept the hotel filled to capacity for a number of years afterward, and it was during this period it became known as the best \$2.00 hotel in Indiana -- a substantial rate for the time.

The city had been growing up around the Randall and newer hotels made their appearance downtown -- the Anthony, Hotel Keenan and the Indiana. Usage of the Randall changed, and finally it became a place for residential occupancy.

Mr. Randall died on February 1, 1916 and was buried in Noble County, Mrs. Randall remained close to the hotel business until the time of her death. She had been active in the lumber industry at a time before hardwoods were replaced in various areas of use by steel.

Unfortunately, the Randall Hotel was not destined to remain with The Landing, but many of its treasures were salvaged as it left the downtown scene.

From aching-back plumbing through the European plan, it survived an amazing span of hotel development.

END OF COLUMBIA STREET: BUT THE LANDING REFLECTS ITS OLD GLORY

Change began to creep along Columbia Street early in the 20th Century, like age upon a dowager, and after the close of World War II a dissipation of interests that had once attracted the Tri-State area moved the thoroughfare rapidly into the area of re-development.

Buildings were requisitioned by progress and leveled. An area bounded by Clinton, Lafayette and Main streets and the Norfolk & Western Railroad was earmarked for the Fort Wayne Fine Arts complex. The block bounded by Calhoun, Clinton and Main streets and the railroad was chosen as the site of the City-County Building.

On August 11, 1970 it was proposed to develop a six acre formal park in the tract just east of the City-County Building in memory of Frank Freimann, late president of The Magnavox Company.

All that is left of once-teeming Columbia Street, the city's main business artery for many years, is its block-long western terminus that has been adopted by Urban Redevelopment as The Landing--an area once distinguished by the canal docks.

Until 1963 this nostalgic stretch of the old city had been eyed as a parking area to serve government and the fine arts. Late in that year, an interest developed in the preservation of the 100 block of West Columbia Street.

This awakening of civic interest was stimulated the following year when eighteen junior and senior architectural students of the University of Notre Dame chose this section as a field restoration project. They began their work April 30 under the direction of Dr. Robert Schlutz of the university school of architecture, Mrs. Thomas (Jane) Dustin and Mrs. R. Gerald McMurtry of Fort Wayne.

With their research and sketching, the students actually accomplished a transformation of the fading business block--they were catalysts for what was to follow.

Mayor Harold S. Zeis, a student of history, named a Mayor's Commission for the Preservation and Restoration of Historic Landmarks on August 10, 1964: Mrs. Edward (Joan) White was named chairman and her original co-workers were Mrs. Dustin, secretary; Roy M. Bates, city and county historian; George Bradley; Daniel Reibel, then director of the historical museum; Mrs. S. C. Snyderman; Rex M. Potterf, now city librarian emeritus and Edward C. Dodez, now deceased. Appointed consultants to the Commission, were James R. Fleming, president and publisher of the Journal-Gazette and Fred Reynolds, chief librarian of the Fort Wayne and Allen County Public Library.

The western block of Columbia Street came officially to the attention of city councilmen the evening

of March 23, 1965. They suspended rules to set aside the old business block as an historical project and passed an ordinance removing parking from both sides of the street. It was to be called "The Landing" because of its old association with the canal docks.



The Landing from the southwest corner of Columbia and Calhoun streets looking west. Photographed 1966 by George Craighead.

Physical transformation of The Landing began on April 12 of that year with the installation of eighteen gas lights and the planting of trees. Sidewalks were extended and the street narrowed to twenty-eight feet. Building fronts were restored and redecorated and landscaping was added.

The development and dedication of The Landing was managed by Canal Days, Inc., a non-profit organization of historical interests. The membership drive of the corporation was directed by David L. Hughes; Mrs. Ruth Whearley was publicity chairman, Mrs. R. Gerald McMurtry corresponding secretary and Robert Kigar co-chairman.

The first of the gas lamps was presented to The Landing Project by the Fort Wayne Newcomers Club with Mrs. Jack Walter, president, directing the ceremony. Also participating were Mrs. Carson Noecker, treasurer of the club, Robert Kigar, member of Canal Days, Inc., and Harley Jensen, division manager of the Northern Indiana Public Service Company which furnished the labor and materials for the lighting installations.

Development of The Landing then proceeded rapidly with various firms and individuals donating services and money--nothing was used from tax revenues. Contributors were John Dehner, Inc., excavation; Fort Wayne Park Board, trees and earth fills; May Stone & Sand, Inc., materials; Hagerman Construction, fills and tamping; Concrete Products, Inc., large tree tiles; the Northern Indiana Public Service Company, fittings and gas line installations; Decatur Salvage Co., railroad ties; Erie-Haven, Inc., cement; Jocquel Supply Co., tiling; L. W. Dailey Construction Co., construction forms; General Portland Cement Co., mortar; Bricklayers Union, Local No. 2, brick laying; Paul C. Brudi Stone & Gravel Co., gravel; W. & W. Gravel Co., Inc., mortar sand; Krick-Tyndall Co., Decatur, tiles; L. I. Griffin Co., crane; C. L. Schust Co., retaining wall sealer; Central Catholic High School students, painting and miscellaneous work; Art Mosaic Co., sidewalk work; Sandpoint Greenhouses, Inc., flowers and planting along the street; Pion Landscape Co., flowers and paintings.

The first distinguished visitor to The Landing was Sen. Vance Hartke on September 18, 1965, and the following September the restored business block was visited by a group of northern Indiana mayors who were entertained by Ed Kane, proprietor of The Big Wheel Restaurant.

Dedication of The Landing on October 23, 1965 was effectively coordinated with celebration of the 125th anniversary of the city by the Fort Wayne Jaycees.

During the civic ceremony an historical marker listing the highlights of the street and honoring His-

torian Roy Bates was unveiled and presented to the city. The marker was a gift of patrons of 1965 Batesway Tours conducted by Bates for the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.

John Haley was general chairman of the program which began downtown with a torchlight parade, and George Kinne was master of ceremonies. Al Kalazk and Ray McFarland were co-chairmen of the Jaycee promotion. On that evening The Landing officially became a part of Fort Wayne's historical heritage.

In 1968 a Landing Association was formed by Columbia and Pearl streets merchants to promote and direct activities along the street. Businessman Kane was named president; Edward Collins, vice-president; Dale Byers, secretary-treasurer and Mrs. White special advisor.

"Special thanks are due Mrs. White for her foresight, organization and planning that resulted in the preservation of this last remaining block of the most active street in this tri-state area," commented Bates who has spent years compiling this history of the city's first main street.

All walks of life contributing a broad range of effort have saved The Landing as a practical municipal heirloom and an example of civic pride among those who remember Columbia Street in its heyday and those who enjoy a backward look.

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